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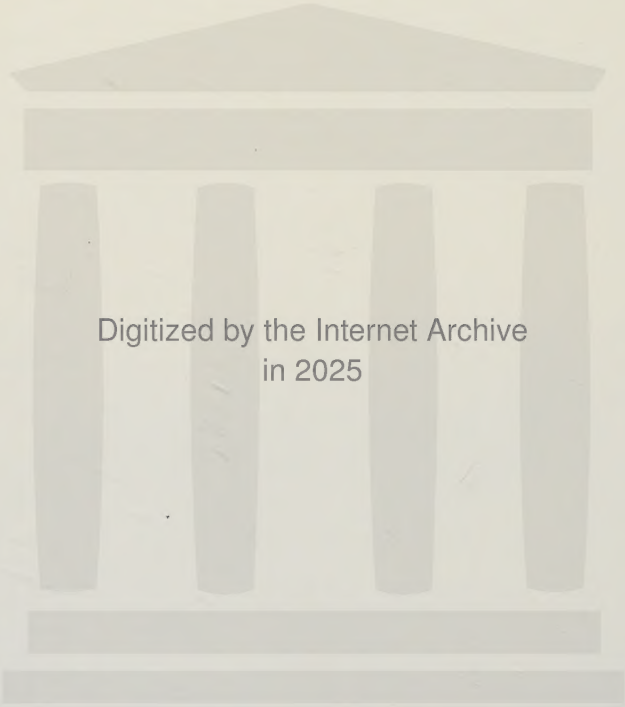
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Pedobaptist AND Campbellite Immersions:

BEING A REVIEW OF THE ARGUMENTS OF "DOCTORS" WALLER, FULLER, JOHNSON, WAYLAND, BROADUS, AND OTHERS.

BY A. C. DAYTON.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,
BY J. R. GRAVES.

LOUISVILLE, KY.
BAPTIST BOOK CONCERN
1903

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The Ella Grove Baptist Church, Glennville, Ga.
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Unto Him be glory by the church . . .

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
psalms 11:3

When Jesus promised that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church," the succession of John's baptism was guaranteed. The church is a divine institution and baptism is a divine ordinance. Without the Lord's church as administrator, there can be no scriptural baptism. Without such baptism, there can be no church to authorize it; and, the validity of each depends upon the scriptural authority of the other.

The "Trail of Water" precedes and succeeds "The Trail of Blood."

This is still the issue and since Dr. Dayton's scriptural agruments and logical deductions have never been proven unsound, we commend the reprinting of this book. We recommend the reading of this work to all who know and love the truth.

Elder J. E. Pierce
Pastor, Grace Baptist Church
Bradenton, Florida

INTRODUCTION.

SINCE it was at my solicitation that the author consented that his reviews of Waller, Johnson, and Fuller, originally published in the Southern Baptist Review, might be given to the public in the form of a "little book," it seems but proper for me to introduce it to the religious public.

I do this, not only cheerfully, but with a degree of pleasure seldom experienced in performing a similar office, for several reasons:

1. The question is a most important one—vital to the peace, prosperity, and perpetuity of the Baptist denomination.

2. The denomination is divided in sentiment. By far the largest part—perhaps nine-tenths of the churches in the North—receive the immersions and ordinations of Pedobaptists and Campbellites as valid, and regard their societies as evangelical, i. e., scriptural churches.

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From the North, the practice has been introduced into the South, and it was supposed that a few years since, before so bold a stand was made against it by several leading papers, a majority of the churches in some States would recognize such immersions as valid baptisms, and, perhaps, the majority of the churches in Kentucky, Missouri, and parts of South Carolina would to-day receive such acts as baptism.* I confidently believe that this work will be influential in bringing about a unanimity of sentiment touching this subject.

3. The question is most widely agitated, and the denominational mind is greatly excited upon the subject, especially in the South, and this must be regarded as a favorable time to discuss the question in all its bearings, and establish those principles, if possible, and apply those scriptures that must forever put the question at rest, before our churches become more entagled and confused.

4. We commend this work because we believe that the author has most conclusively shown that the Scriptures clearly forbid any body but a scripturally organized church to authorize baptism, and then by an administrator connected with a scriptural church. Will not every Baptist bow to the authority of God's Word?

5. He has shown that all the examples of baptism in the Scriptures are opposed to the administration of the ordinance by those neither baptized nor members of a scriptural church.

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*The practice prevails to a larger extent in those States whose Baptist papers and leading men advocate the validity of such baptisms.

6. We commend it to all other denominations because from it they can learn how they are regarded by all consistent Baptists, and how rigidly consistent is the practice of all those Baptists who reject Pedobaptist and Campbellite baptisms, whether the action was sprinkling or immersion, as well as in denying these societies to be evangelical or scriptural churches.

7. We introduce it with the greater pleasure because we verily believe that it will prove the end of all controversy upon this subject, to every candid and true principled Baptist. If the end of this controversy cannot be looked for in these pages, where can we reasonably look for it? The ablest advocates of the validity of such immersions, have here put forth their strongest arguments, and between this array of doctors of divinity every possible argument is urged that any other advocate can consider at all relevant. Surely the advocates of such baptism can well afford to trust their cause in such hands. And, I am confident, that all who oppose such baptisms are perfectly willing to intrust the advocacy of their cause in the hands of our author. If this question is not settled in the minds of all Baptists by this work, we may not expect that it will be settled in our day.

There are two points that might be urged with great force upon all baptists, of which the author has not seen fit to avail himself.

The recognitions of such baptisms as valid, forces all Baptists logically and irresistably into open communion, and more, to the admission that the existence of Baptist churches is not necessary!

We reject the premises from which such a conclusion follows, because the conclusion is an untruth—an absurdity to every Baptist who holds the avowed principles of our denomination. To every *true* Baptist, open communion is unscriptural and unwise. This has been satisfactorily demonstrated to him by the Scriptures and the English experiment. It is *axiomatic* to every real Baptist, and, therefore, to him this argument is conclusive, for he cannot embrace a conclusion that is contradictory to the fundamental principles of his faith.

Let me examine this question briefly. We take it for granted that every Baptist will admit, "That the proper administrator, as well as the proper subject of baptism is clearly designated by the Scriptures, for, he is an essential part of the ordinance of christian baptism, since baptism involves the ideas of *administrator, subject, action and design,* and therefore, it is supposed that if any one of these is described and enjoined in the Scriptures, we must suppose that each one of them is clearly indicated and enjoined. And then again, Baptism is a positive law and since no positive law is left to be inferred, certainly no essential *part* of a positive law can be supposed to be left to be *inferred,* but must be clearly indicated. If Baptists deny this, they must repudiate one of their most cherished and distinguishing principles, *i. e.,* that the Scriptures are a perfect rule of *practice* as well as faith.

Baptists, then, must admit that this question is settled by the Scriptures. If this is granted, all Baptists must admit that christian baptism can only be Scripturally administered by a duly baptized administrator who is a member of a true visible Church and acting under

the authority of such Church. If Baptists recognize the *immersions* of Pedobaptists and Campbellite Societies, they thereby recognize such Societies as truly Scriptural and Evangelical Churches?

But to admit this they must admit that the Scriptures authorize several radically diverse forms of Church Government, and membership, and ordinances, and faith, and orders in the ministry. And since a Church can be no more than Evangelical, or Scriptural, and not less, and still be Scriptural, it follows that Baptist churches, being only Scriptural, are only equal to Pedobaptists and Campbellite Societies, since things equal to the same thing are equal to one another.

If then such Societies are Scripturally equal to Baptists Churches, why may they not commune with each other as Baptist Churches do? And what is the necessity for Baptist Churches at all? Since, it is sufficient for any christian to belong to a Scriptural or Evangelical Church?

We see here that the logical and irresistible conclusion that follows from the admission that the immersions of such Societies are valid, not only forces Baptists into open communion, but to concede that were all their Churches annihilated from the face of the whole earth, still there would exist thousands and tens of thousands of Scriptural churches, amply sufficient for the wants of the world.

The Baptist who can embrace these conclusions is not a Baptist in principle, and renounces not only the faith of the Baptists, but the plain teachings of inspiration.

2. The second fact which must be influential with Baptists is, by receiving such immersions for valid bap-

tism they would repudiate the universal practice of their ancestors for more than twelve centuries past.

Does not every Baptist glory in the fact that he is a descendant of the martyred Anabaptists, with whose blood, the woman robed in scarlet was drunken for so many centuries before Luther, or Calvin, or any one of the Reformers was born? The Baptist who is not proud of his descent, from that martyred host who are resting under the throne until the day of God's vengeance and their glorification shall come, either is ignorant of the history of Baptists, or unworthy of being numbered among them. Why were they called Anabaptists? Because they baptized all who came to them from the Catholic party, or any sect, which they regarded as heretical. Why did they reject the immersion—for immersion was the prevailing practice for more than 1300 years, says Wall himself—of the Catholics and of heretical sects? Because, they believed that a *corrupt* or *unscriptural Church could not give valid baptism.*

This fact is patent upon the face of history. We can learn from Augustine, why the Donatists of the 5th century re-baptized those who came to them from the Catholic party. "You Donatists say they are baptized in an impure church by heretics."*

The Paulicians were hooted at in Councils for *re-baptizing* in private houses (says Robinson) and holding conventicles, and for calling the established Church a worldly community, and re-baptizing such as joined their churches.**

The Novatianists were banished and slain by the Catholics because they re-baptized those who came into

*Orchard, page 95. **Robinson Resh., page 92.

their communion. "In the fourth Lateran council, canons were made to banish them as Heretics, and these canons were supported by an edict, A. D., 413, issued by the Emperors Theodosius and Horonius, declaring that all persons re-baptized, and the re-baptizers, should be punished with death. Accordingly Albanus, a zealous minister, with others, was punished with death for re-baptizing."*

The Waldenses, according to the testimony of Reiner, a messenger sent by the King of France to learn their doctrines and practices, expressly taught "that a man is then first baptized, that is rightly baptized when he is received into their Society." †

Of the Albigenses and others, about the year 500, we read that they held the Catholic community not to be a church of Christ. They therefore re-baptized such as had been baptized in that community, before they admitted them to their fellowship. For this conduct they were called Anabaptists. ‡

The Beghards or Picards, according to Dr. Wall, required of *every one* who came over to their church, to be baptized anew in mere water. §

It was charged against the Baptists by the famous Roman Catholic Bishop Bossuet, that "This re-baptizing is an open declaration that in the opinion of the brethren, the Catholic Church has lost baptism.||

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*Orchard, page 61—Bap. Mag. 256.
† Alex. Pred, ch. c. 20, p. 190, quoted by Orchard, p. 283
‡Orchard, page 167.
§ History Infant Baptism, quoted by Orchard, page 327
|| Rob. History of Bap., p. 463.

That the Baptists of Germany, even in Luther's day, were like their predecessors, the Waldenses and Albigenses, Paulicians, Novatianists and Donatists, is evident from the fact, that "He persecuted them under the name of re-dippers, re-baptizers, or Anabaptists."*

The very term by which Cardinal Hosius designates our Churches, establishes our position, when he says, "If the truth of a religion were to be judged by the readiness and cheerfulness which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinions and persuasions of no sect can be truer or surer than those of the Anabaptists (that is, the re-baptizers,) since there have been none for these 1,200 years past that have been more generally punished." This shows that they had *always* been accustomed to baptize again, or rather truly to baptize those who come to them from other communions.

That they rejected not only Roman Catholic but also Protestant baptisms, is evident from the testimony of Bullinger. He says:

"The Anabaptists think themselves to be *the only true Church of Christ,* and acceptable to God; and teach that they who by baptism are received into their churches, *ought not to have any communion* [fellowship] with [those called] evangelical, or any other, whatsoever, for that *our* [*i. e.*, evangelical, protestant, or reformed] churches *are not true churches any more than the churches of the Papists.*"

The position that we take, in rejecting such immersions, is identical with that maintained by our ancestors in the face of every fearful form of death. Will the

*Rob. History of Bap., 540.

Baptists of America repudiate it? But, what should be far more influential, will the Baptists of to-day reject the Bible as the *perfect* and *only* rule of practice, and resort to special legislation to legalize confessedly informal acts? Did not the only Law-giver of his Church see all the circumstances by which the Church would be surrounded? Did he not see the existence of these "irregular christian churches," and their informal acts? If He provided no law to legalize them, will a *Baptist* church do it?

J. R. G.

NASHVILLE, January, 1858.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"Who Shall Decide When Doctors Differ?"

And what if it should chance that for the most part the doctors are agreed? would it not be the very height of rashness and egotism for a plain and unlearned man to differ from them all, and even go so far as to fancy that he might be able, by the mere force of simple truth, to set at rest forever a question which had long disturbed the minds of those who thought about it, and settle it, too, upon a position directly the reverse of that, for which the doctors had contended?

It certainly would seem so. But then our case is not quite so bad as this. Here is a question—a serious and practical question of official duty to the churches of Christ. One upon which almost every church is likely, sooner or later, to be called on to take decisive action. It is whether a person who has been immersed upon profession of his faith, by a Pedobaptist minister, acting in behalf of a Pedobaptist church, and who thereafter

shall apply for admission as a member of a Baptist church, shall by that church be regarded as having been truly baptized, or not baptized at all? If he has been baptized, the ordinance must not be repeated; for Christ requires but *one* baptism. If *not* baptized, the ordinance must be administered, for Christ requires that every member of his church shall have been baptized. Here, then, is the point which the church must determine: Was that immersion a true baptism, according to the Scriptures, or was it not? Upon her decision of this question her action in regard to his reception will depend.

That the question is one of great practical importance, and that it has been so regarded by the churches, is evinced by the discussion which it has provoked. That it is exceedingly desirable that it should, if possible, be so answered, once for all, as to secure uniformity of action among all churches, no one will doubt. But many will doubt whether this can ever be done. That very great diversity of opinion does exist, will be seen by the following letters. The majority of the "Doctors," so far as we have been able to gather their opinions, are either undecided, or else believe that the churches should regard such persons as baptized. Were we to be decided by the influence of great names, we should probably ourselves lean to that opinion. But we long since have learned to take no teaching in regard to religion, of any man, however great and good, and learned, as certainly true, until we had ourselves carefully tested it by the word of God. The Bereans were not praised because they implicitly believed *without examination* the teachings, even of an apostle *but because they "searched the Scrip-*

tures daily whether these things were so." When, therefore, my attention was first called to this subject, by a letter from a brother beloved, in South Carolina, enclosing a copy of the published letter of Elder Fuller, of Baltimore, with a request that I would review it, I carried it to the Bible, and by its teachings endeavored to ascertain what was the truth concerning it. So ignorant was I, that I did not know but that it was a *new* question, for the first time presented to the consideration of the churches. To me the teachings of the Word appeared so plain, that it was a matter of wonder that even one had come to what appeared so strange and unscriptural a conclusion.

I afterwards learned, however, that so far from being a *new* question, it was one which had, for a long time, distracted and rent our Zion; that it had been, again and again, the object of earnest, and sometimes of almost angry contention; that Elder Fuller, so far from standing alone, was sustained by the opinions of such "Doctors" as Curtis and Johnson, Wayland and Waller, and that there were many who believed that it had been the uniform practice of the denomination in all times to receive immersions so administered as valid baptism. Such a discovery, made after my review of Elder Fuller's letter had been written and published to the world, might well have given pause to one much better qualified than I to conduct such a discussion. It seemed more likely that I should be in the wrong than that so many, so wise, so good, so learned men should have been mistaken. It surely called for a re-investigation upon my part of the grounds upon which I had so hastily ventured an opinion.

That re-examination has been made. I have endeavored carefully to study the subject in all its bearings. The published opinions of the "Doctors," so far as I could find them, have been collected and compared, analyzed and tried by the teachings of God's Word.

The best and strongest arguments which they have made are here presented by themselves. They have all the advantage which talents and learning could give them. What these "Doctors" have not done for the defense of these opinions we take for granted cannot be done. They are to this cause what Hector was to Troy. If any could defend their positions successfully they were the men. If Fuller and Wayland, if Johnson and Waller, cannot make good the point which they contend for, others need hardly make the attempt. Upon that side, we suppose, we have the end of the strife. No new arguments are likely to be presented—or if there should be, the gleaner on the field which such men have reaped, will not be likely to gather anything of equal value to that which they have already brought in. If, therefore, we have succeeded in showing that they have failed, utterly failed, to establish their position, may we not hope that this will decide the controversy at once and forever. Not because the talent and the learning are not theirs, but simply because the truth is ours. Whether this hope be the mere suggestion of egotism, or whether it have a good foundation in the nature of the reasonings presented, the reader must decide.

As neither of these articles, nor our review of them was originally intended for publication in this form there may be repetitions of the same thoughts, and possibly of the same language. We trust the reader will ex-

cuse this upon the ground, that to make it otherwise would mutilate the argument which was designed to be in each case a mere reply to that presented on the other side. The object of the reviewer in each case was not so much to discuss the whole subject in all its bearings as to meet that peculiar phase of it which had been put forward by the author whose article was the subject of examination. And it will be observed that in each case the materials for our argument in reply have, to a great extent, been drawn from the *author himself* to whom we were replying. This plan, though probably by no means the best mode of discussing the question in a book which should at once embrace the whole subject, was thought to be the most effective and proper for a review in which each article reviewed stood upon its individual merits, and was in part, at least, sustained by the previously acquired and well deserved reputation of the author of it.

Of the opinions and arguments here collected in favor of the reception of Pedobaptist immersions as true and genuine Christian baptism, those of Elder Waller were first published, and we have thought best to place them first in order in the body of this work. The reader will perceive that he is *much less confident* than "Doctor Wayland," whose sentiments were published in The Western Baptist Review, vol. iv. p. 31.

Says Wayland:

"I have not the shadow of a doubt in regard to the question of which you write. The only command is, to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that is, as I suppose, in baptism (that is

immersion) to profess to submit ourselves in all things to God. It is the outward manifestation of what we have done before, in the recesses of a contrite heart. This is the whole of the command. There is no direction given beyond, nor have we a right to make any. It is convenient, as a matter of church order, that there should be some general rule, and that this rite be administered by a clergyman, and it would be naturally performed by one who had been himself baptized by immersion. But if these things be absent, from necessity or ignorance, they alter not the fact, that the person who has been immersed on profession of faith, is, as I understand it, a baptized believer. This is a very common case with us in this city. Congregationalists, Episcopalians and Methodists here quite frequently baptize persons on profession of their faith. We consider them as baptized believers, and when they request it, admit them upon a simple relation of their experience. Indeed, were not this admitted, I know not to what absurdities we should be reduced. If the obedience to Christ depends upon the ordinance being administered by a regularly baptized administrator, where are we to stop, and how shall we know who is regularly baptized, or who has obeyed Christ. All this looks to me absolutely trivial, and wholly aside from the principle which, as Protestants and Baptists, we have always considered essential to Christian liberty. It seems to me like assuming Puseyism under another name, or in fact going back to the elements of the Catholic church. Such are my views. How they meet the views of others, I know not, but to me these principles of Christian freedom are above all price. It is time that we, above all others,

should 'walk in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not be entangled with any yoke of bondage."

On the same page we find the opinion of "Doctor Johnson," of S. C., who seems scarcely less confident than the other. It is as follows:

"I have carefully examined the New Testament in reference to the manner in which the preacher of the gospel is to be brought into the office, and the nearest approach to it is found in 1st Cor. 14th chapter. The brethren of a religious society should exercies their respective gifts in the presence of the body, and then the gifts will be apparent. Those who are blessed with an aptitude to teach will show it, and its recognition by the body is the authority to preach; and whoever is authorized to preach, is authorized to baptize—the latter being the minor work. I therefore receive those who are recognized as preachers by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and all orthodox bodies of believers, as preachers of the gospel, and receiving them in this relation, I receive them as baptizers; and when the ordinance is administered by any of them to one who professes faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, I receive it as valid."

The reader will observe that he regards all "*religious societies*" as churches, and all equally authorized to confer authority to preach and to baptize. As we are informed that he is the same with "W," whose arguments we have examined at large in another place, we will not comment on that strange position here.

Rev. D. Bythewood says:

"I have always thought the Beaufort church right in leaving the question to the conscience of the candidate. I could never see any reason from the Bible for requiring re-baptism. I remember, many years ago, the question was proposed to an Association in England, which decided that the want of baptism in the administrator did not invalidate the act to the person baptized."

The Rev. Mr. Lathrop thus speaks in behalf of himself and the leading ministers of N. York:

"So far as it has been in my power, I have ascertained the views of leading brethren in this city. Brethren in this quarter are pretty generally agreed on this point. Perhaps nine out of ten of our ministering brethren regard baptism in the case proposed as valid. Their reasons are as follows: The individual was immersed in good faith, viz: had repented of sin, believed in the Lord Jesus; and on looking into the Bible, saw that the first thing afterwards to be done, was to be baptized, and 'arose and was baptized.'

"But the administrator, you think, and so do I, was not qualified, that is, who is not himself a baptized man. The question arises—Is it *essential* to the validity of baptism that the administrator shall be in all respects qualified? It is always *desirable*, but is it *essential?* It is thought not. What in an administrator is a higher qualification than piety? Yet how many unholy, unconverted Baptist ministers, as we have reason to fear,

have administered the ordinance of baptism to true converts. When, afterwards, such men have apostatized, no one has supposed that all whom the apostate (unqualified as he was) had baptized, should be re-immersed. If in good faith and to answer a good conscience, the individuals supposed have been baptized, they have discharged their duty. The administrator must settle his account with God."

"The case, I admit, is a somewhat difficult one, from the fact that there is nothing in the Bible that bears directly on the point. We can be guided only by general principles, and a reference to consequences. I confess that in looking over the whole matter, I am inclined to the opinion, that to re-immerse under the circumstances mentioned, would be to establish a worse precedent than to pursue the contrary course."

"Doctor" Curtis, of S. C., says:

"The result at which I have for a length of time arrived, is quite similar to that to which you appear to have come. The immersion of unbaptized parties received at the time by the baptized in good faith, and as the counsel of God, are irregular, but not invalid—undesirable—not to be encouraged—palpably inconsistent *on the part of the administrator*—but, as I have been taught, not reqiring to be repeated. In special cases, and where a scrupulous conscience in the subject urged the repetition, I should not perhaps be scrupulous about repeating it. But I am clear that this is not required."

Benedict, the Historian, (after mentioning the opinion of the Richmond Association, that re-baptism is to be required,) says:

"As persons are frequently applying for admission into Baptist Churches, who have been immersed by Methodist and Congregational ministers, this question has, within a few years past, been often proposed, and most Associations have decided differently from this. All agree that it is an unadvisable measure, for a person to apply to unbaptized ministers to lead them into the water; but after they have been properly immersed on a profession of their faith it is generally thougth that it would be improper to immerse them a second time. It is difficult to conceive why they would not, in this case, come under the denomination of Anabaptists."—(*Vol. II., pp.* 472-3).

But now, lest it be thought that *all* the "Doctors" and great men of the denomination agree substantially with these, we will subjoin a few *opinions* on the other side. "Doctor Manly," in 1848, writes as follows:

"About the question of re-baptizing, I must say I have been greatly in the dark. On the question of independent abstract propriety of repeating a baptism once rightly administered, there can be no difficulty. But this case is embarrassed by many circumstances that throw the administration into great doubt. I can suppose a case, (an extreme one) in which the want of baptism to the administrator would not vitiate his performance of it to others. But ordinarily or when it can

be avoided, is it best or as good to have an unbaptized administrator? I would not choose to volunteer a declaration that I thought their baptism invalid. But I would not assert that it is valid. I lean over to the side of baptizing them when they come to us. I can have no doubt they are baptized acceptably in this case. In the other I might have some doubt. And I decide the case rather on the ground of expediency; because I cannot see far enough into other grounds to know on which side the argument preponderates."

But after the publication of the letter of "Doctor Fuller," herein reviewed, he gives as the result of his further investigations, the following:

"*Dear Brother*:— * * * I do not wish to write and publish my views on this subject, still less would I have my views presented *uncalled*, in any meeting either of a church or Association. But I may say to you in friendship, privately, that I do not think it would be expedient for Baptist Churches in this country to recognize the baptisms of Pedobaptist ministers. They never immerse, when the candidate can be persuaded to any other method; they generally *speak against* that particular mode, and sometimes ridicule it, and they seldom fail to make a ridiculous and contemptible farce in their way of administering it—to say nothing of these administrators being themselves unbaptized—this *saying and unsaying*—this doing of what they dislike and condemn, and which they treat as if they despised it, is not to be presented to Baptist Churches as an act which they are to approve or sanction. Like Eli's sons, these ad-

ministrators make the offering of the Lord, *in that instance, to be abhorred*—it is their wish to do so; and to prevent any one who witnesses their performance from ever desiring to see it repeated, or to have it in that form themselves. Now, when Baptists are asked to receive these baptisms, they are asked, in effect, to sanction these proceedings, and thus to become partakers with them in this objectionable administration.

"But, suppose it were done decently in the case of any particular candidate, there are inconsistencies about it, on the part of both administrator and candidate, that vitiate the performance, and, in this country, where people can find ready access to Baptist churches if they wish, these inconsistencies would prevent me from acknowledging and receiving such baptisms. The candidate in demanding baptism by immersion, declares a belief that no other mode is scriptural. If this is not his belief, then no one's administration could make him a fit member of a Baptist church, which is based on that belief. If he does not believe this, then, where is the consistency of his immediately joining in fellowship with those who disbelieve it; of his helping them in a cause which omits it, on principle, and condemns it as unscriptural? By this last act, he takes back and contradicts all that he had said and done by his own baptism. If it were allowable, on other accounts, thus to "show much love" to Christ's ordinance, and then in works to deny it, surely no value can be attached to it on account of the supposed honesty, sincerity, or conscientiousness of the recipient; for he contradicts himself, and it is quite sufficient to refute his claim to an

orderly, consistent baptism—to place his own authority against himself.

'If I build again that which is destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.' This erects consistency into a gospel principle of duty. Now, in the supposed case, the candidate destroyed the notion of Infant baptism, of sprinkling, or pouring, when he demanded to be immersed as a professing believer; but he builds up those things again, when he goes into a voluntary and habitual fellowship with such as delight to practice them, and when he stands by and silently sanctions these things as the practice of the body to which he has chosen to belong.

* * * * If one is a Baptist, let him be a Baptist. * *

In your wife's case, I hope the dear sister will see that, in coming into a Baptist church, she ought to be baptized; (I will not say *again*) she *ought to be baptized by a Baptist minister*, for the reasons I have given. Even if she has no sense of the defectiveness of her Pedobaptist immersion, this does not prove that it was infallibly right and sufficient. It is only an opinion of hers, which may be as apt to be wrong as the opinion of other people. Especially, why should she set up her judgment against that of the whole body of churches of the only people under heaven who are striving to keep the ordinance of baptism as Christ delivered it? If the principles on which her Pedobaptist immersion proceeded, are right, then there is no necessity for the separate organization of Baptist churches, or the existence of even the denomination itself; that ordinance of Christ can be sufficiently well maintained by Pedobaptist administrations of immersion.

I think, therefore, that, until Baptist churches are prepared to allow that there is no necessity for their own separate organization—no necessity for their existence as a denomination—their is little prospect of their agreeing to receive and sanction such baptisms as that which your good wife received. She ought now, to be baptized *for conscience' sake*, if not her own, at least for the sake of the consciences of others, who would be grieved and offended by being required to take a course so inconsistent and suicidal. To come into a Baptist church, under her present baptism, could be no gain to her; she receives nothing. Her coming in that way could be no gain to the Baptist church, in the matter of baptism; they receive nothing, and lose much. Under such circumstances, her prospect of usefulness or of benefit, would be as good out of the Baptist connection as in it." * *

Elder A. Broadus, of Va., in his reply to queries presented by "Xenoi," thus expresses his opinion:

"I could wish the circumstances of the case had been stated by Xenoi a little more explicitly as I think it might thus be treated in a more definite and satisfactory manner, than by an answer to the queries which are subjoined.

"Your applicants, it seems, have been baptized, *i. e.*, solemnly immersed, upon a conviction of the scriptural requisition, and their consequent duty and privilege, as believers in Jesus Christ. But in accomplishing this object, there was, as I understand the matter, some irregularity. And this irregularity,I take it for granted,

was namely: that the series of baptisms was commenced by an unbaptized individual; for, so the statement seems to imply. It says, that "after much serious consultation and fervent prayer, it was unanimously resolved, that one of the Elders, being immersed, the work should go on," &c. And the apology for this irregularity, appears to be the *non-existence of any Baptist Church of scriptural faith, 'within their knowledge or reach.'* Thus, as I apprehend it, stands the case; and the question arising out of it is, can these persons be considered as baptized with a valid baptism, and received accordingly? This, it must be admitted, is an important matter, and one not to be settled at a single stroke. It presents one of those difficulties which irregularity is apt to involve; yet it requires to be settled, and in the best manner that circumstances will admit.

"Let us inquire, can any degree of irregularity be admitted in the performance of those divine ordinances, called positive institutions, without destroying the validity of the performance?

"Any deviation from the original plan, the divine model, must be allowed, in such a case, to be dangerous; and I should say, that as positive institutions possess in themselves no intrinsic value, but derive their worth from the authority and command of the institutor, a change in the form or the subject of the institution must subvert the ordinance, and render the performance nugatory. To which I may add that the same effect would follow, where the action on the part of the administrator or the subject, should appear to have been performed in the spirit of mockery, or without regard to the solemnity of the object."

"Now, to the particular case before us. The plea of difficulty here urged, I take it for granted, is a reasonable one; and the irregularity, as before presumed, consists in the commencement of the series of baptisms by an unbaptized—perhaps an unordained individual. But it was all done upon solemn conviction of divine requirement, upon profession of evangelical faith; and in due form, according to Christ's expressed will as to the action. Does the apparent defect in the circumstances here stated, invalidate the baptism? I am persuaded it does not.

"I will plead, not as a precedent, the case of the baptism of Roger Williams, and his congregation in Rhode Island, from whom many of the Baptists of this country have sprung; if that was wrong, it cannot make this right.* Nor am I disposed to deny, that baptizers in the apostles' days were all baptized persons; though, by the way, the first baptizer was not so; but this is to be admitted rather as a matter of course, all believers being then baptized straightway; that is, where it could be done. It ought to be so now; and in that case, there would probably have been here no difficulty. The baptizer who commenced this operation, ought himself to have been baptized before this period; but it does not follow, that because he was not baptized, and now perhaps could not be, that therefore he ought not, under existing circumstances, to have engaged in this work.

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* Is it certain that many of the Baptists of this country, have sprung from Roger Williams? I think not. Will all who wish to see a history of Roger Williams' church, examine a little book, "Trials and Sufferings for Religious Liberty, etc." Price 40 cents.—Ed.

George Whitfield, who was a Pedobaptist, and never baptized, ought to have been baptized before he went forth to preach; he might have been too, if he would; and yet I should be loath to say, that George Whitfield, though he ought to have been baptized, ought not to have preached at all, unless he had been baptized. And so of many others.

The baptizer ought himself to be previously baptized. This is readily admitted; and though for anything that appears to the contrary, the obligation lies on him rather in the character of a believer, than in that of an administrator, I would be far from sanctioning the practice of baptizing by an unbaptized administrator, where the nature of the case does not render it necessary. The conduct of some Pedobaptists, both on the part of the administrator and the subject, presents an anomaly which can neither be justified nor excused—the subject submitting to be immersed by an unbaptized administrator, who has no faith in the act,"—(*Life and Writings of Rev. A. Broaddus,* pp. 453-457).

This, for all practical purposes, is quite equivalent to a denial of the right of Pedobaptists, to baptize at all, since there is no case in which the parties "*have no Baptist church,*" or minister "*within their reach or knowledge,*" and where they are likely to desire baptism by immersion. In another place, Elder Broaddus says, " Let it be moreover remembered that *Pedobaptist ministers have no right to be tampering with baptism,* they themselves refusing to submit to the ordinance."

"Doctor Cone," of New York, gives his opinion as follows:

"You ask whether persons immersed by Pedobaptist ministers ought to be received into a Baptist church? I answer, No. Such baptisms are not considered valid by the regular Baptist churches, either of England or the United States. See the commission, 'Go ye," &c., and 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' There would be nothing but disorder introduced into gospel churches, could baptism be administered by any but ministers duly authorized."

The opinion of Elder T. Meredith, of N Carolina, the late distinguished Editor of the "Biblical Recorder," and whose judgment upon such a subject is entitled, probably, to quite as much consideration as those of any of the "Doctors," may be gathered from the following correspondence:

Dear Brother:—I have taken the liberty of writing you a few lines, begging your views on the following question: Is baptism by immersion, when performed by a Pedobaptist minister, who has been poured on himself, or sprinkled, valid and ought persons so baptized to be admitted into the Baptist church? Your compliance will be esteemed a great favor by an humble Baptist; and I must beg your forgiveness for the liberty I have taken, being a stranger. JAMES FRIPP, JR.

Reply.—In reply to the foregoing, we would respectfully state the following—although we have had occa-

sion to express substantially the same views before.

"1. Baptism is indispensable, as a qualification for an administrtor, or it is not. If it is not, then all denominations of Christians, the Friends only excepted, are in error; for all maintain that, in order to be duly qualified for the administration of gospel ordinances, a person must have a valid baptism. Our Pedobaptist friends would no more receive baptism from a person whom they considered unbaptized, than would a Baptist of the most rigid principles. But if baptism be indispensable as a qualification for an administrator of that ordinance, then it must follow that a person cannot be validly baptized by one who has not himself received a valid baptism.

"2. Again, immersion is indispensable to a valid baptism, or it is not. If it is not, then Baptists and all others who insist on immersion, are in error, and lay a very unnecessary stress on a form of baptism, which, for sundry cogent reasons, might as well be dispensed with. But if immersion is indispensable to a valid baptism, then an administrator who has not been immersed, has not received a valid baptism himself, and of course cannot be qualified to administer a valid baptism to others.

"3. If the foregoing reasoning be correct, a person who insists on immersion as a valid baptism for himself, thereby virtually denies the validity of a baptism administered by a person who has not himself received a valid immersion. And hence all such persons convict themselves of the absurdity of either insisting on that which is unnecessary for themselves, or of receiv-

ing a baptism which, on their own principles and on their own showing, can have no just claims to validity.

"4. By the same reasoning—should a Baptist church think proper to admit to their number, a person who has been immersed by an unimmersed administrator, they thereby convict themselves of the inconsistency of contending for what is superfluous in relation to themselves—and of admitting one into their communion who, on their own principles, and agreeably to their own practice, cannot have received a valid baptism.

"5. Should it be said that this view of things implies the necessity of an *uninterrupted succession* of qualified administrators, from the Apostles down—we reply, it does so, as a *general rule*—but not more so than the views of all persons who consider baptism as a qualification for an administrator of the ordinances. In this respect we occupy the same ground as that occupied by our Pedobaptist brethren. We all insist on the necessity of a regular succession of qualified administrators as a *general rule*—but all agree that the general rule may have exceptions—that necessity knows no law—and that when a valid baptism is absolutely impracticable, it may be dispensed with *altogether*, not only without sin, but without affecting the validity of such ordinances, as from the necessity of the case are made to emanate from such omission. The Head of the church requires his laws to be rightly obeyed when obedience is practicable—and when obedience is not practicable the will, if it truly and sincerely exist, will be taken for the *deed*. It is required of man according to what he *has*—not according to what he has not.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRECISE QUESTION TO BE SETTLED—THE PRINCIPLES BY WHICH IT CAN BE DETERMINED.

Before we can engage to the best advantage in the discussion of any question, we must determine precisely what it is that we desire to decide. The question we now propose to answer is a simple question of church duty. A person who has, upon a profession of faith in Christ, been solemnly immersed into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by a Pedobaptist minister, and in order to his reception with a Pedobaptist society, applies for membership in a Baptist church. Shall that church regard him as baptized or unbaptized? If baptized, she must receive him as though he had come from a sister Baptist church without further ceremony. If unbaptized, she must administer the ordinance before she can receive him.

The question as commonly put is, whether such baptism is *valid* baptism? Now what do we mean by

"*valid?*" It may save us a great deal of trouble to settle this point before we go any further. And,

1. It is evident that when, as a church of Christ, we say a baptism is "*valid,*" we mean to say that it is *scriptural,* or, in other words, that in all essential particulars it is exactly conformed to the requisitions of the word of God. It corresponds precisely in all its essential features to the Scripture model. We have no other law for baptism but that contained in the Word. By this only can we know that we are to baptize at all —by this only can we know whom we are to baptize— and by this only can we settle any question which may arise concerning it.

2. Baptists all agree that the person baptized must be a believer in Christ, and that a baptism conferred in infancy, or before any profession of faith in Christ would be invalid, that is unscriptural.

3. Baptists all agree that the very act of baptism as expressed by the word which in the Greek language is employed to designate it, is immersion. Anything else claiming to be baptism, they must, therefore, reject as invalid, that is unscriptural.

4. Baptists all agree, moreover, that a baptism to be "valid" must have been performed by some one as the administrator. This the very nature of the ordinance requires. Believers were ordered to be baptized—not to baptize themselves. If they are to be baptized, somebody must baptize them. This is self-evident.

5. And it is equally self-evident that every man and every woman and every child who has the physical strength to bury another in the water is a scriptural administrator of baptism, unless the Scriptures have

limited the administration of it to certain persons or classes of persons. If the Scriptures merely direct those who are conscious that they have believed, to be baptized, without specifying of whom they are to seek this rite, then each must be at perfect liberty to choose his own administrator. The wife may select her husband, though he be no believer. The child may choose his parent. The sister may call upon her brother. The servant his master or his fellow-servant. Where there is no law there can be no transgression. If the Scriptures do not designate the administrator let men beware how they set bounds where God has left all free. If God has authorized each individual believer to choose his own baptizer, no society or church, Baptist or Pedobaptist, has any right to come between that individual and the administrator of his choice—let that administrator be who or what he may. Let us beware how we usurp authority in the kingdom of Christ.

6. It must also be self-evident, that if God in the Word has limited the administration of the ordinance to any person, or classes of persons, *no others* have or can have, any authority to administer it. If he limited it to some, he by that act forbade all others. To deny this, is to declare that although God has expressly limited it to a certain class, yet it is not limited to them, but is unlimited; though God has fixed definite bounds. yet there are no bounds existing, but every one is just as free to do it as though there were no bounds. This is a contradiction and absurd.

7. It is equally evident, that the Scriptures must either have limited or not have limited, the administrators of baptism; and if they have limited them at all,

the limit must be fixed and definite. That is to say, there must be some whose baptism is valid, that is scriptural, given by authority; and some others whose performance of the rite would be invalid, that is unauthorized, and therefore, according to section sixth, forbidden and sinful.

8. Once more. It is self-evident, that if a command to believers, as such, to be baptized, limits the reception of baptism under that command to believers; the command to administer the baptism given to the baptized, as such, limits the administration under that command to those who are baptized. Or if given to church members as such, it limits it to church members. Or if given to ministers as such, it limits it to ministers. If there be any authority to baptize others than believers, it must be found elsewhere than in the language, "he that believeth and is baptized." So if there be any authority to others than such as those to whom Christ said: "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them" etc., it must be found somewhere else than in this great commission.

Now with these eight points before us. Each one admitted, or so self-evident that it needs no proof, may we not hope to set this question permanently at rest. Can it be possible that we cannot ascertain from the Word of God, whether the administration of baptism was limited to some, or open and free to all. If limited, can we not determine at least whether it was limited to those who had received it, or, in other words, to the baptized. If we can but make out this one point we need go no further. Then it will follow of necessity, according to section sixth, that baptism administered by the

unbaptized is a forbidden, and therefore sinful thing, which the churches ought not to recognize.

Here then we see the point to which, from the logical necessity of the case, our investigations must be directed. 1. We must ascertain whether the Scriptures have limited the administrator at all, or whether every believer is at liberty to choose, in the church or in the world, among the saints or the sinners, who shall bury him in the water in accordance with the commandment? 2. If it be limited at all, to whom is it limited?

Surely, one would expect to find no very serious difficulty in settling the first point at least. So evident is it, that the Scriptures have placed some bounds here, that few, if any, will be found bold enough to contend that every believer is at liberty to choose, as above stated, his own baptizer. Among all the absurdities which have been held, I do not think that any society of Christians who recognized baptism as required at all, except only some few Baptists, have ever ventured to hold such an absurdity as this. Without exception they all contend that it is limited, and, with the solitary exception of a portion of the Baptists, they all agree that it is limited to baptized members of the churches, most of them, to ministers lawfully ordained by the churches. What these Baptists believe and teach it will be seen from the review following is rather difficult to decide.

Let the reader determine if he can. But one thing to our mind is certain, and that is, that this question, like the communion question, could never have risen if all who professed to be the followers of Christ had promptly obeyed the teachings of God's Word. In regard to this question, as to that a portion of the Baptists

have been driven, apparently by the fear of being charged with bigotry and exclusivism, to take a position which no Presbyterian, or Methodist, or Episcopalian would dare to take, viz., that those who have not been baptized and are not members of any church are yet authorized by the Scriptures to administer Christian ordinances—so true is it that "the fear of man bringeth a snare."

It may serve to show how probable it is that they are wrong, that like the defenders of infant baptism these brethren while they all agree in the conclusion—viz., that the immersions of Pedobaptists are good and valid baptisms—yet they cannot agree upon the grounds on which this conclusion should be left to rest.

Elder Fuller says the matter must be left to the conscience of the applicant. Now, this is equivalent to saying that the Scripture has left it for every man to choose his own baptizer, as stated in section five, and if so, of course the church has nothing to do but ask if he is satisfied.

Elder Waller says that the commission was given to the churches, as such; an it follows, of course, that of the administration of baptism is limited to them and such as they may appoint; and he seems to suppose, though he does not venture to assert, that they (the churches) may go outside the kingdom, and appoint those who have never themselves been made members! How else he gets authority for them, we cannot discern.

Elder Johnson, *alias* "W.," discovers that these Pedobaptist immersers are officers, not indeed of the churches, of which, he says, they cannot even be members, but of the *visible kingdom*, which is a different thing from

the churches. But yet he recognizes baptism as the initiatory rite of this kingdom, without such none can be visibly a member in it, and must therefore be driven to the absurdity of contending that Christ intrusted the administration of the initiatory right of his kingdom, to men who are not visible members of it. But let us not anticipate. They will speak for themselves.

CHAPTER III.

REVIEW OF J. L. WALLER.

Some years ago, our lamented Brother Waller prepared and published in the Western Baptist Review, the following Article. In the recent discussion of this subject and of questions growing out of it, reference has been often made to this great man's opinion, as though it should of itself do very much to settle the controversy. I am very glad, therefore, to see his article republished in the Western Recorder, of November 25th, 1857, so that brethren may see for themselves what positions he actually took, and by what arguments he endeavored to sustain them. Let the reader observe how small a part of all he said has any direct bearing upon the question in dispute. That question is not whether one baptized in unbelief is properly baptized. Upon this point Baptists are very generally agreed. Nor is it whether baptism given by a *layman* is valid baptism. But whether baptism administered without any authority from a true visible church of Christ, is true and valid baptism. If Pedobaptist Societies are not true

churches of Christ, then baptism conferred in them, is conferred by neither ministers nor laymen, but simply by those who are not members of a visible church of Christ at all. But here is the Essay; and notwithstanding its rambling and desultory character, it merits most attentive consideration, if for no other reason than because it is the production of one whose name itself is regarded by many as a tower of strength to those who can rally behind it in any contest:—

ESSAY.

"The inquiry is often made, whether persons baptized upon a profession of genuine repentance and faith, by a "Reformer," or by a Pedobaptist, ought, on such baptism, to be received as members of Baptists churches? In the West, the practice of our churches has not been uniform, and the opinions of brethren who have bestowed considerable attention upon the subject, are discordant. This question is substantially the same with that which has for many centuries elicited so much angry and useless discussion, viz: Is an ordained minister in the true church, as an administrator, at all times essential to the validity of baptism?

But our practice, although not uniform ,has not been the cause of any serious misunderstanding. It has been left entirely to the churches to dispose of, as the merits of the applicants seemed to demand; and where dissent has occurred at all, it has been confined to the bounds of the church where the case existed; and to the churches in their independent capacities it rightfully belongs. It can never be taken from them. We must

be understood, then, as simply discussing a question of expediency and propriety, about which a variety of opinions may exist, and yet furnish no just cause of alienation of feeling. In the discussion of this and all kindred questions, our arguments must necessarily be based upon inferences drawn from the Scriptures. There is no express precept or example to guide us in our investigations. The question is a new one—originating out of the unhallowed and unfortunate dissentions and divisions that have transpired since the canon of Scripture was closed. But we must be careful not to violate any of the injunctions of the Scriptures, and to examine attentively for those great landmarks drawn by inspiration, to conduct the patient and prayerful enquirer after truth in the ways that he should go. The primitive practice is clear. The path in which the holy men of old walked is so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. Then all who believed and were baptized, were admitted into the church. The commission of the Saviour was, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "Preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."*

The first matter that the church should inquire into respecting an individual baptized by a "Reformer," or a Pedobaptist, is, was he a disciple or believer, in the Scriptural sense of these terms, before baptism? An unconverted person is not a disciple or believer in the Bible sense, and therefore cannot receive Christian bap-

*Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15-16.

tism. This is most fully asserted by Mr. Campbell, in his debate with Mr. Rice. He says:—

'No man believes more cordially, or teaches more fully, the necessity of a Scriptural change of our affections—a change of heart—than I do. I have said a thousand times that if a person were to be immersed twice seven times in the Jordan for the remission of sins, or for the reception of the Holy Spirit, it would avail nothing more than the wetting the face of a babe, unless the heart is changed by the word and spirit of God. I have no confidence in any instrumentality, ordinance, or observance, unless the heart is turned to God. This is the fundamental, the capital point; but with these, every other divine ordinance is essential for the spiritual enlargement, confirmation and sanctification of the faithful.'—Pages 544 and 545.

You have heard me say here, (and the whole country may, have read it and heard it many a time,) that a sevenfold immersion in the Jordan or any water, without a previous change of heart, will avail nothing, without a genuine faith and penitence. Nor would the most strict conformity to all the forms and usages of the most perfect church order, the most exact observance of all the ordinances, without personal faith, piety, and moral righteousness—without a new heart, hallowed lips, and a holy life, profit any man in reference to eternal salvation."—Page 678.

As we would not receive a babe into our churches, no matter how solemnly its face had been sprinkled, so, according to the reasoning of Mr. Campbell, we could not consistently admit an individual to membership, who had been baptized without his heart being "changed

by the word and the spirit of God." Without this, though plunged ever so often, it is no more baptism than "the wetting the face of a babe." Of this change, then, the church ought to be fully persuaded. The Baptists will not admit one to baptism unless they believe his heart has been changed, that he has "a genuine faith and repentance." They could not, therefore, without manifest impropriety and inconsistency, receive a person baptized in any other denomination unless satisfied that he had experienced a change of heart before baptism. Thus far, then, we suppose there will be no difference of opinion.

The next matter of inquiry is: Has the person, as above described, been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? If not, then the commandment of the Saviour has not been complied with; and as a guardian of the truth and of the word of God, the church must reject him. Baptism is immersion. This we will take for granted, and shall not pause to prove. Of course it is not expected that Baptists will recognize anything else as baptism. The matter before us then is, that a person whose heart has been changed by the Word and Spirit of God, and who has a genuine faith and penitence has been solemnly baptized, or immersed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a "Reformer," or Pedobaptist. What does he lack yet? Is the commission fulfilled which says: "Make disciples, baptizing them. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

To these questions only one answer can be returned: that his baptism is strictly in accordance with the commission, unless it prescribes the administrator as abso-

lutely as the mode and the subject. So our investigations are now limted to the inquiry, whether the great commission has made the validity of the ordinance depend on the administration, as well as on the subject and the mode? To a certain extent, all will answer the question affirmatively. The difference of opinion consists in this, whether the administration of baptism is limited to a privileged class in the church or not. This is a vexed question, and has long been agitated. It has given rise to much discussion, and able advocates on either side have been found in all the leading denominations of Christendom. The Episcopalians are divided. One party, while it admits that baptism ought ardinarily to be administered by one who has been especially ordained, yet contends that it may, in certain cases, be administered by others; and that such a baptism, although irregular and defective, is nevertheless valid. But another party denies the validity of all laybaptism—that is "Baptism (or the form thereof) administered by such as have not received a regular commission to act as Christ's ministers, from the successors of the apostles, the bishops of the church of God. None admit the regularity or the legality of laybaptism who maintain that Episcopal ordination is necessary to constitute a man an ambassador of God. With those who deny that Episcopal ordination is essential to a regular, legal and valid ministry we have no common ground. For we regard as laymen all who have not a commission Epis copally conveyed. Our argument is with those who, while they maintain (according to the primitive and Catholic rule, *nulla Ecclesia sine Episcopo*, no church without the Bishop,) that a commission derived from

Christ through his Apostles and their Episcopal successors, is essential to regular and valid ministration in things divine, hold, notwithstanding that the irregular and illegal ministration of the Holy Sacrament of baptism, in particular, whether by a layman in or out of the church, is truly a sacrament, and valid to the receiver."* Not unlike this is the minutes of the General Assembly of the (Old School) Presbyterian Church in the United States, setting forth the reasons why Papal baptism should be rejected, viz: that baptism is invalid, unless "administered by a regular ordained minister in the true church of God visible." These opinions of the Churchmen and of the General Assembly are equally destitute of foundation. They are as impalpable as phantoms; Scripture, facts, and common sense, utterly subvert them. The Bible knows nothing of those ecclesiastical oligarchs—of those inflated bladders of spiritual dignity, which Mr. Ogilby denominates "Bishops," and "Episcopal successors" of the Apostles. He rejects the baptism of the people of God who, during the darkness of Papal superstition, "the world's midnight," were "worn out" by the persecution of the Man of Sin, because, according to his theory, they were laymen;" not having received "Episcopal ordination;" and he recognizes the bloodthirsty monsters whose hands were reeking with the blood of God's people, as the prelatical successors of the Apostles! From the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition, according to this hypothesis, we can only receive true baptism; and mystical Babylon is the mother of all the true churches of God. But the Scriptures say that she is the "Mother of

*Ogilby against baptism, pp. 13, 14.

Harlots." Nor have we from the Apostles a regular succession of ministers, deriving ordination in an unbroken chain in the true church of God visible. The ministerial successors of the Apostles is an order dependent for its existence on proofs, as chimerical and dream-like as that of "Episcopal successors." The Redeemer made no promise of such a succession. It is the invention of man's vain imagination. Its career has been that of inquiry. It has no foundation in truth. It is no where in the Scriptures made the duty of ministers as such to give the rite of baptism. To the churches are committed the keys. They can open, and none can shut; they can shut, and none can open. The churches are the highest authority under Christ. They are not dependent on the ministry for existence, but the ministry upon the churches. That propriety may make it expedient for the churches to assign the administration of baptism to their ministers or servants, so far from being denied on our part, is most earnestly and strenuously insisted upon. But the expediency which dictates that baptism should usually be committed to the preachers of the gospel, does not bind the churches at all times to intrust it to their hands, or receive it alone from them.

That our brethren will not think our views novel, or that we are attempting innovations upon their time-honored doctrines, we will quote from the oldest Baptist creed ever put forth in the English language—the one published in London, 1643:

'The person designated by Christ to dispense baptism, the Scriptures hold forth to be a disciple; it being no where tied to a particular church officer, or person ex-

traordinarily sent—the commission enjoining the administration being to them as considered disciples, being men able to preach the Gospel.'—Art. 41.

But we have far higher and older authority than this. The Scriptures inform us that "Jesus himself baptized not, but *disciples*."* It was to his *disciples*** that the Saviour said, 'Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' And the Apostle says to the Church in Corinth, 'Now I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things,, and keep the ordinances as I delivered then unto you.'||

The churches have not transferred baptism to the ministry. This they could not do without proving recreant to the trust committed of heaven to their charge. They may and do authorize their servants, the preachers of the gospel, to discharge this duty for them; but it does not follow that they must always authorize them and no others; or that they cannot receive it when administered by others. Hence the baptism administered by the pastor or bishop of one of our churches is received without hesitation or debate by the others. Hence, too, the baptism of Roger Williams, and of the first church in Providence, is considered as valid and as Scriptural as if administered by the Apostle Paul. They believed and were baptized. They were first disciples and then baptized in the name of the Trinity. They were doers of the law.*

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*John iv. 2 **Matt. xxviii:19. ||Cor. xi. 2.

*Roger Williams and his companions were Pedobaptists. From reading they were led to embrace Baptist

Mr. Benedict, in his History of the Baptists, has aptly remarked:

"All agree that it is an unadvisable measure for a person to apply to unbaptized ministers to lead them into the water; but after they have been properly immersed on a profession of their faith, it is generally thought that it would be improper to immerse them a second time. It is difficult to conceive why they would not, in this case come under the head of Anabaptists.' [Vol. ii., p. 473.] It is urged by some that the Pedobaptist minister does not administer immersion in good faith and that "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.' This may be true of the administrator—he may commit sin in the case supposed, but it does not affect the subject. He is not responsible for another's sins. The old maxim is appropriate to our subject: *Quod non debuit fieri, factum valet*, that is, what ought not to be done, is nevertheless, valid when done. Baptism, as we demonstrated a short time since, is a solemn profession of religion. The believer publicly acknowledges his allegiance to Christ—is buried with Christ in baptism, and rises to walk in newness of life —declares that he is dead to sin—his baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God. If the church is satisfied that all this is true of the individual who has received the ordinance at the hand of a "Reformer," or Pedobaptist, it appears to us that she cannot deny him admission to membership. The commission of our

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sentiments. Williams was baptized by one of his disciples, and then he baptized the rest. This was the beginning of the first Baptist Church in Rhode Island.

Lord is not only preserved in spirit, but in letter. The whole design of baptism has been clearly met. To such an individual there remaineth no more baptism. He could not be baptized according to the commission, nor to secure any of the ends contemplated in the institution of the ordinance.

We deem it unnecessary to say more. These views are submitted with much diffidence, and we have been induced to give them only because we have been urged to do so by respectable brethren in different sections of the West. Although conscious that we are sustained by the great majority of Baptists now and in time gone by, still we know that many, eminent for piety and learning, entertain opopsite opinions. But it is a matter which all concur in declaring belongs to each church, without question or appeal—that it does not and ought not to involve matters of fellowship. In past times, it has caused no divisions, and but little discussion among the Baptists; and, it is confidently hoped and believed, that their good sense and their devotion to the real interests of Zion, will restrain even the most restless spirits from making it now a cause of dissension. Let everything but a pure conscience in the sight of God yield to the preservation of harmony and peace among brethren. It is good and pleasant for such to dwell together in unity."

We trust the reader has carefully examined the positions and defences of our lamented brother. We should give them their full force and value. But let no one be led by a mistaken reverence for the dead to yield to them a jot or tittle more than by virtue of their truthfulness they may claim. Opinions are not more true

when he who uttered them is dead, than they would be if he were living. Let us, therefore, neither be hindered nor biased in our investigations by this circumstance. The question is whether a church of Christ should regard and receive as valid baptism an immersion conferred by one who was not a member of such a church, and without authority from such a church? Eld. Waller states it thus: "Whether persons baptized upon a profession of genuine repentance and faith by a Reformer or by a Pedobaptist, ought on such baptism, to be received as members of Baptist churches?" If the so-called churches of Reformers and Pedobaptists are true and genuine Scriptural churches of Christ there can be no dispute. Their baptism in that case is truly valid. If Elder Waller regarded them as Scriptural churches, having equal authority for their official acts with Baptist churches, then our controversy must go back and begin at this point. The whole history of his life, however, would seem to contradict the suggestion that he entertained any such opinion, and if he did, we have not here the space to lay open all the grounds of controversy upon the question. What is a true church of Christ?* I shall, therefore, take it for granted that when Elder Waller speaks of churches he means Baptist churches, or such as Baptists are accustomed to regard as the true and genuine visible churches of Christ, according to Scriptures. Upon this understanding he shall himself furnish the weapons with

*The reader will find a most careful and elaborate examination of this question in all its details, in the second volume of Theodosia Earnest; or, Ten Days' Travel in Search of the Church.

which to batter down and grind into dust his own conclusions.

To the question, whether a real believer solemnly baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a Reformer or Pedobaptist, has been truly baptized according to the commission; he says: "Only one answer can be given,' viz., "that his baptism is strictly in accordance with the commission, unless the commission prescribes the administrator as absolutely as the subject and the mode. So our investigation is now limited to the inquiry whether the great commission has made the validity of the ordinance depend on the administration as well as on the subject and the mode." "To a certain extent," he says, "all will answer this question affirmatively." Then, we ask him, to what extent? How far does the commission go towards determining who shall be baptizers? One would expect, in view of the ultimate conclusion to which he seeks to draw us, that he would at least atttempt to show that the commission either does not determine anything at all concerning this point, or that it determines that those not members of a true church, and without any authority from a true church, are authorized by a commission to baptize. But he says no such thing. He does not intimate that anything like this is true. Not at all. "The difference of opinion," he says, "this, consists in viz., whether the administration of baptism is limited to a privileged class in the church or not;" and then goes on to discuss the question whether the church can authorize any but a minister to confer the ordinance. By making this issue he virtually yields, at the outset, the point about which we are con-

tending. Our question is, not whether baptism may be conferred by a lay member in the church, if the church should authorize him, but whether it can be conferred by one who is not a member at all, and without any authority whatever from the church. "To this complexion it must come at last," unless we take the ground that Pedobaptist societies are true and genuine churches of Jesus Christ, and if we take this ground there is nothing to contend about.

"To the churches," he says, "are committed the keys. They can open and none can shut. They can shut and none can open. The churches are the highest authority under Christ. They are not dependent on the ministry for their existence, but the ministry upon the churches. That propriety may make it expedient for the churches to assign the administration of baptism to their ministers or servants, so far from being denied on our part, is most earnestly and strenuously insisted upon. But the expediency which dictates that baptism should usually be committed to preachers of the gospel, does not bind the churches at all times to intrust it to their hands or to receive it alone from them."

Now let us humbly ask, if this be true how can Pedobaptist societies or Pedobaptist ministers have any authority to administer baptism unless the churches, to whom in the Scriptures it is given, should transfer it to them? But this, Elder Waller declares, they have no right to do. They may not, he says, even transfer it to their own ministers, much less to those who have no sort of connection with them, and over whom they have no sort of control. "The churches," he says, "have not transferred baptism to the ministry. This they

could not do without proving recreant to the trust committed by heaven to their charge.."

Now let any man of common sense decide, if the question be not narrowed down to this: Can a church of Christ transfer to one who is not a minister, and not a member of any assembly which she recognizes as a true church of Christ, the administration of baptism, when she cannot even transfer it to her own ministry?

If her own minister cannot administer baptism without her sanction, how can it be given without her sanction by one who is not even a member?

But now if it be said that the whole authority to administer baptism being in the church, she can authorize whom she will to administer it. Let us grant it for a moment, though it is not true; and then the question is: Has she granted the right to Pedobaptist churches or Pedobaptist ministers? Would she grant it even should they be fools enough to ask it of her? No one will contend that she has conferred any such authority, or that there is any sense in which a baptism conferred by them is conferred by the authority of the church, to which alone, according to Elder Waller's own showing, all the authority in the premises was committed—and so committed that she could not transfer it even if she would.

"They," (the churches,) continue our author, "may and do authorize their servants, the preachers of the gospel, to discharge this duty for them; but it does not follow that they must always authorize them, and no others, or that they cannot receive it when administered by others." Let us admit all this and then the question will stand thus: Granted that all the author-

ity to administer baptism is committed by Christ to the church—granted that the church may, and ordinarily ought to, authorize baptism to be administered by her servants the ministers—granted that she may authorize others besides her ministers, and may receive baptism as legal and Scriptural when conferred by others besides her own ministers. Who are these others? Our author had been arguing to show that private members of a church might, by the church, be authorized to administer baptism as well as ministers. But he had not tried to prove that they, much less those who are not members at all, could confer valid baptism without the authority of the church; and it is certain that Pedobaptist immersions are conferred without such authority. These "others," therefore, must be private members whom the church had authorized to baptize without ordaining them to preach.

To these the church must be restricted, unless she has a right to confer the authority to administer the most solemn rite of that visible kingdom in which she is the executive of Christ, upon those who despise and reject that rite—upon those who are not members of that kingdom—upon those, of whom as a church, she has no knowledge—over whom she can exercise no discipline and exert no sort of church control—upon those whom, if they were members, and thus within the reach of her discipline, she would be bound at once to exclude from her communion, as teachers of false doctrine, and perverters of Christ's ordinance.

Grant that the right of Baptism is in the church, and that she may confer it on whom she will, or receive it from whom she will, she must nevertheless be re-

stricted in the exercise of this liberty, by her constitutional limits. And even if it were true, as Elder Waller states in the beginning of his Essay, that "there is no express precept or example to guide us in our deliberations," yet common sense itself would teach that neither a church nor any other close society, could with any show of propriety authorize or permit men to stand without and confer in its behalf the rites they would not themeselves receive. If the question had no connection with religion, every man would confess the absurdity of such a course. None of the kingdoms of this world would be guilty of such folly. No secular society is found guilty of such folly. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." But if there was not common sense enough within the visible kingdom of Christ to guide the churches in this matter, is there nothing in the written constitution of that kingdom to direct them upon whom they may or may not, confer the right to administer baptism.

Whatever right the churches have, they have *as churches*, as the executive charged with the administration of the laws and ordinances of the visible kingdom of Christ. And in the exercise of these rights, they cannot go beyond the constitution and laws under which they exist, and which they are to execute. This constitution and these laws, we have in the New Testament. If, therefore, there can be found in that document, any precept or example upon this point—or if there be anything there from which we may fairly and legitimately infer anything definitely concerning the will of the King upon this subject, by these the churches *must* be governed. Now, let us suppose for a moment, that we

have no precept and no example. What would be the nature of the inferences we would be compelled to draw from the teachings of the Word? Elder Waller has shown that the right to confer baptism was given to the churches—and that the churches are at liberty to authorize their ministers, and "*others*," to perform it for them. Our question is, *what* "others?" Are they to be in the churches, or out of them? Are they to be persons who have themselves obeyed the Lord, and been baptized, or those who reject the ordinance, and condemn and abuse those who insist on its obedience? Now, we humbly submit, that if there was nothing to the contrary in the Word, there would be a very strong inference, from the simple fact that the selection of the administrator was left to the churches—that he was at least to be a member of the churches. If the Lord had intended that it should have been performed by those outside the churches, he would most probably have left it to those outside, to select the administrator.

But it is true that we have neither precept nor example on this subject in the Word. Elder Waller says so, and yet he goes right on to say, "The primitive practice was clear. The path in which the holy men of old walked is so plain, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." One would naturally expect, after this declaration, that he would attempt to show that "the primitive practice" was what he now recommends—that those "holy men" did habitually or at least occasionally, send out of the church for a baptizer, or recognize as baptism the immersion of a Jewish proselyte by a Jewish priest. But, strange to tell, he only declares that "then [that is, in Apostolic times,]

all who believed and were baptized, were admitted into the church. The commission of the Saviour was, Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," etc. And further on he says, "The person designated by Christ to dispense baptism, the Scriptures hold forth to be a disciple." "The Scriptures inform us that Jesus baptized not, but his disciples.* It was to his disciples that the Saviour said, Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them, etc."

Now, if it be true, as he says, that in those days all who became disciples, were baptized and admitted into the church; and if it be true that the person designated by our Saviour to dispense baptism was a disciple, then the person designated to dispense baptism was a baptized member of Christ's visible church. So we have both precept and example, according to the showing of Elder Waller himself; and all he could have meant by saying we have neither, is that there are neither which favors the position which he set out to establish. This is most certainly true. On that side there is neither precept, example, nor any fair and reasonable inference. And but for the conviction which at one time took possession of the minds of many Baptists, that Pedobaptist societies were true and valid churches of Christ, the idea that they could confer a valid baptism would not have been entertained by any Baptist church. Elder Waller has shown us that the persons designated by Christ in the Scriptures, to administer baptism, were disciples, and that these disciples were baptized church members. And now, what ground has he left that he can stand upon? His argument, divested of matters which have

* John ix. 2.

no bearing upon the question before us, amounts to this: The commission was given to "*the churches.*" "The churches may appoint their ministers, "or others," to administer the baptism which the commission requires. But these "others" must be *baptized disciples;* for, "the person designated by Christ to dispense baptism, the Scriptures hold forth to be a disciple," and "the primitive practice is clear" that "all who believed and were baptized, were admitted into the church."

Let us, to test the value of the argument, reduce it to a syllogism:

The authority to baptize is not in the ministers, but in the churches. The churches can authorize their ministers or other members, to perform it.

Therefore, the churches can authorize those who are neither ministers nor members, but unbaptized rejectors of the ordinance to perform it! "Oh, most lame and impotent conclusion."

And thus does Elder Waller himself furnish the weapons to destroy his own defences.

CHAPTER IV.

REVIEW OF R. FULLER.

———Jan. 15, 1857.

My Dear Brother.—I beg you will give me your views, as to re-baptizing persons, who have been baptized (immersed) by Pedobaptist ministers. I do not ask this as a question of theoretical theology. I am deeply interested in the matter, as an urgent, practical question. I am a Baptist minister, and pastor of the ——— church, in the State of ———. My wife was a member of the Methodist church, is truly converted, and, on a profession of her faith in Christ, was baptized by a Methodist. She wishes to unite with the Baptists; but she says she has been baptized, and dares not repeat the ordinance. The Church requires her re-baptism. You see how painful is my situation. Give me your views on this subject, and oblige one who truly loves you.

Yours in the best of bonds,

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Baltimore, Jan. 20, '57.

My Dear Brother.—I sympathize sincerely with you, and pray that God may guide your wife and self in this important matter. I know how to appreciate the

feelings of your wife, for the question is not a new point with me. I was a member of a Pedobaptist church, and was immersed. On joining that Church, I required it of the pastor, for, as a Greek scholar, I was satisfied that baptism was immersion. When conviction compelled me to become a Baptist, I reflected on the subject, and was baptized again, and for two reasons: First, I then knew that I had never been converted to God before. And, Second, My first baptism was clearly irregular. The first preachers were themselves baptized, and baptism by an unbaptized administrator appeared to me manifestly irregular. I, therefore, resolved to correct this irregularity, and leave nothing informal in this solemn act.

Your wife, however, does not regard the matter in this light; and, therefore, the enquiry arises, "Ought the Church to require her re-baptism?" I think not. The distinction between an act which is informal and an act which is null and void, all will admit. A marriage may not be performed by one every way qualified according to the provisions of a civil statute, but it would be monstrous to pronounce it void, and their children illegitimate, on account of this want of some qualification in the person who officiated. If the parties acted in good faith, and took upon them the marriage vows, shall their cohabitation be declared fornication, and their children bastards, because a magistrate, for example, had not complied with some ceremony specified by law as incumbent on magistrates? Certainly not. The magistrate may be punished, but the marriage is not null and void. Let us now apply this to the matter in hand, and enquire if the baptism of a believer

is null and void, because the officiating minister has neglected his own duty as to this ordinance.

Now there is one argument which, of itself, goes far to settle this question. It is that if no baptism be valid without an administrator, whose baptism is regular, then there can be no valid baptism. The validity of baptism would depend on an unbroken succession of regularly baptized administrators from the days of the apostles; and if there be a defect in this chain, that defect violates all the subsequent baptisms. The oft exposed fiction of the apostolic succession is ridiculous enough, but the baptistical succession is even more puerile.

It may be replied, however, that this argument, though a *reductio ad absurdum*, only demonstrates that there can be no valid baptism; it does not prove that baptism by a Pedobaptist minister is valid. Let us, then, look at the point. I think such a baptism, though irregular, yet valid. If the candidate is dissatisfied, the ordinance may be correctly administered. "Baptism is the answer of a good conscience towards God." If the disciple have not this answer, let him have it. But, in a case like that of your wife, the party should not be compelled to repeat the act. Such is my opinion, and my reasons are these:

1. The Commission says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The party has believed and been baptized. Here are two personal acts, one internal, the other external. A defect in the administrator of baptism, can no more invalidate baptism than any imperfection in the preacher can nullify the faith.

2. Consider the use and design of baptism. It is a public profession of allegiance to Christ. It is "putting on Christ." "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" viz.: "Did you confess yourselves as saved by Paul and devoted to him?" Now the party has made this public profession of loyalty to Jesus.

3. Reflect upon the metaphors by which baptism is represented, such as "Buried," "Planted," etc. Has not all this been realized?

4. In the New Testament, baptism is always mentioned as a personal duty, like repentance and faith. The administrator is never referred to as at all affecting the validity of the act. This idea, that a minister confers any virtue on an ordinance, whether baptism or the supper, is a remnant of Popery. As to baptism, this superstition goes beyond Popery. For while the church of Rome contends rigorously for the power of the priest to consecrate everything, it yet admits the validity of baptism by a layman. In referring to baptism, the inspired writers lay no sort of stress on the administrator. They never allude to him except as a matter of history. They simply mention the fact of baptism as they do of conversion. The eunuch was baptized by a deacon. As soon as converted, the most convenient water and administrator were employed. The reference to the "baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," shows how little the Holy Spirit regards the administrator. For there, the only ministry was that of the elements.

5. Where would the requirement of qualifications in the minister terminate? Suppose he had been immersed, but not with the same formula used by us, say, "in the name of Jesus," and not "in the name of the Father,

Son and Holy Ghost." Would this invalidate all baptisms performed by him? If so, the ordinance by the apostles was void; for they had only John's baptism, which was certainly not with the formula prescribed in the Commission. Suppose a minister had been immersed, but holds some doctrine which we regard as erroneous. Does this vitiate the baptism he administers? Surely heresy as to truth is at least as fatal as error, as to an ordinance. But where would the scheme lead us? Who shall decide what error vitiates and what not? I fear some churches would not be satisfied to receive a member from another Baptist church, because he had been baptized by a minister who did not hold election, or perseverance, or limited atonement, or close communion. And how monstrous would this be. Lastly, suppose a minister proves an apostate, are the baptisms he administers all void? This has never been pretended; and shall be so bigoted and superstitious, as to attach more importance to an error about an ordinance than we do to gross immorality, or down right hypocrisy?

These, my dear brother, are my sentiments. They are written in haste, but were formed after much thought and deliberation. The matter has often disturbed churches, but I hope the day is at hand when these controversies will forever cease.

Yours in the Lord Jesus,

R. FULLER.

It is, I believe, very generally conceded among the Baptists of the South, that when Elder Richard Fuller,

of Baltimore, has made an argument for or against any position, it may be regarded as the very best that can be made. What his capacious intellect and cultivated mind, with all the advantages of the most thorough mental discipline, and his long and large experience cannot achieve, no other need attempt.

The surprise and sorrow, which I could not but feel on reading his letter to the Baptist minister, whose wife desires to become a member of a Baptist church upon her *Methodist immersion*, is, therefore, somewhat counterbalanced by the satisfaction of knowing that we have presented to us, in all probabilty, the very best argument which is likely ever to be made in favor of the reception of members by Baptist churches upon their Pedobaptist immersion. And if I shall be able to show, that even this does not weigh the value of one poor straw, the question may be regarded as settled forever. And in view of its great *practical* importance to the unity, order, and purity of the churches of Christ, I feel impelled at least to make an effort to do this. Whether I shall succeed the reader must determine.

There are some duties which the Master requires of *individual Christians*, as such, and others of the *churches*, as such. The duty under consideration is a *church* duty. The question is:

Ought a church to require the baptism of an applicant for membership, who is said to have been already baptized by a Pedobaptist minister?

Elder Fuller says, *No*, provided the candidate be satisfied; and *Yes*, provided he be *not* satisfied. I will venture to differ with Elder F., so far as to say that the

satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the applicant, *has nothing at all to do with* the decision of the question. It is a question for the *church*, and not for the *candidate* to decide. The question is, whether the ceremony which has been performed was true and Scriptural Christian baptism. If it was, it must not be repeated, for Christ requires a Christian to be baptized *but once*. Now, it either was or it was not, and that quite independently of any opinion which the recipient may have come to entertain upon the subject. This is self-evident. For to suppose the contrary would involve us in the absurdity of believing that the man had been rightly baptized so long as he *thought* so, and that he had *not* been, so soon as he should have come to think differently. I am baptized to-day. I think that it is rightly done. I therefore am entitled to admission to a Baptist church. I meet some friend to-night, who suggests a doubt as to the proper performance of the ceremony. To-morrow my opinion has changed; and now I am no longer entitled to membership. Let me ask Elder Fuller, if the *Church of Christ* is to change her opinion of what is right and valid baptism every time I may thus change mine? Two persons are baptized by the same minister, and under similar circumstances: one becomes dissatisfied, and the other continues to regard it as true baptism. Will the church say that one was baptized and the other was not? Can *truth* thus contradict herself, or veer about with every wind of individual conceit?

If the candidate may determine for her *who* are competent administrators, he may determine for her who are competent *subjects* of baptism, and what is the proper act of baptism, and so that he be *satisfied* the

church need not ask or care whether he was sprinkled when a babe or immersed as a believer. If he has the answer of a good conscience, that is, according to Elder Fuller's exposition, *if he really thinks he has been properly baptized*, that is all-sufficient.

There surely is *something* which constitutes a true and genuine Scriptural baptism. And where *that* something has taken place, a *church* must recognize it as Christian baptism, no matter what the candidate for membership may have come to think about it. And where that something has *not* taken place, the church can recognize *no substitute* for it, although not merely the candidate, but all the world beside should believe and say that it would do as well. And what this something is, *the church* must learn *from the word of God*, and not from the candidate. She is not, as the administrator and guardian of the ordinances of Christ, to send out to one not yet admitted to her membership, and ask him to decide *for her* what is essential to true Christian baptism, and be governed by *his* opinion rather than *her own*. Yet this is what she virtually does, as often as she receives or refuses to receive a Pedobaptist immersion, according as the candidate is satisfied, or dissatisfied with it.

Thus much by way of divesting the subject of an incidental encumbrance which only tends to distract the mind from the true issue. Now let us see what that true issue is.

The Church has a question to decide for herself, a most important *practical* question. That is, whether an immersion administered by one who has never himself submitted to the ordinance of Christ and *without*

the authority of any church of baptized believers, is true and genuine Christian baptism according to the Scriptures.

If it be, she violates the order of Christ if she repeat it. If it be *not*, she equally violates his order if she receives one thus falsely baptized without giving him true baptism. It is a question of *official duty*, and must be decided not by the whims of the applicant, but by the *law of the King*.

Elder Fuller does not however seem to realize this. He thinks the baptism may be so irregular as to demand a *re-baptism* for its correction, as in his own case, and yet be *valid* baptism! And his account of the matter shows into what strange inconsistencies even great and good men may fall when they stand arrayed against the truth. The author tells us that he had himself been baptized by a Pedobaptist, but when conviction drove him to the Baptist Church, he saw that "*the first preachers were themselves baptized; and baptism by an unbaptized administrator appeared to him manifestly irregular.*" *I therefore*," he says, "RESOLVED TO CORRECT THIS IRREGULARITY, *and leave nothing informal in this solemn act.*"

Now the inconsistency to which I refer is this: Elder Fuller thinks it *very* important that in *his* case the wrong shall be made right. He will not give the sanction of *his* example to perpetrate this disorder in the churches: he will personally do all that *he* can to correct the irregularity; yet he seems to think the *official* sanction of a *Church* of Jesus Christ is of so much less importance than that of his *individual* example, that he does not hesitate to say that she ought *not* "*to correct the*

irregularity" as he had done. It was right for Eld. Fuller. It was *important* for Eld. Fuller that in *his* case "*nothing should be informal in the solemn act.*" But it is of so little consequence to others, to the cause of Christ, to the order of Christ's kingdom, or the welfare of the *Baptist Churches*, that he thinks *they* may very properly give their mind and *official* sanction to just such *irregularities* as often as they may be desired!

A stranger might on reading Eld. Fuller's letter be almost led to ask, who can R. Fuller be that he should fancy it so important for *him* to set right what he so readily advises the *churches* to leave wrong?

But let it pass. I wish now to consider the distinction which the writer so ingeniously makes between a baptism that is *invalid* and one which is merely *irregular*. I grant that there may be irregularities which do not invalidate the ordinance, but it is self-evident that they must not be of such a character as to affect what is *essential* to its Scriptural administration. An irregularity which maks the baptism *unscriptural*, makes it invalid. What the churches have therefore to determine in these cases is simply this: Is the baptism of Christ's kingdom in the Scriptures *required to be administered by those who have themselves received it?* If it be, then without some special provision to the contrary, others are by that requirement *forbidden* to administer it. Just as the law requiring the baptism of believers *forbids* the baptism of those who do not believe. And if *forbidden* to others it must be *invalid* when performed by them.

Now let us go to the Book and ask, *Who are required to administer baptism just as we are accustomed to go to it to learn who are to be baptized.*

1. "Go *ye* and teach all nations, *baptizing* them." Who are these *ye?* baptized or unbaptized? Eld. Fuller says, *they "were baptized."* Is any authority given elsewhere to any others who were *not* baptized? No one will say so. Is there any *example* of any one baptizing who had not been baptized? Eld. Fuller cannot find one. How, then, with this law given to the baptized, and without one solitary precept or one single example contravening it, can it be pretended that it was ever permitted to any other?

Well might Eld. Fuller ask, as he does (page 230 of his invaluable book on baptism and communion): "WHAT WOULD BE THOUGHT OF A MINISTER WHO SHOULD GO ABOUT PREACHING THE COMMISSION AND BAPTIZING, AND YET HIMSELF REMAIN UNBAPTIZED?" Yet in the letter before us he talks as though the commission left it an open question as to whether the men who preached and baptized should be themselves baptized or not. Eld. Fuller says, page 117 of his book, "*The* ONLY *authority to baptize any body is the commission.*" This is true; and if so, it must be equally true that the commission *is the only authority to any body to baptize*, and that, as he himself admits, was given to the baptized.

2. Eld. Fuller says, "consider the *design* of baptism." I *have* considered it, and am compelled to the conviction that the great *practical* object which baptism was intended to accomplish could only be accomplished when administered by one already in the kingdom and acting

under the legal authority of the kingdom . The design of baptism, so far as it affects the relation which the baptized sustains to the churches is *initiation* into the body of Christ's visible people. It makes him a member of Christ's *visible kingdom*. A particular church, as the executive body in the kingdom, must be composed of those who are members of the kingdom. He who has professed his faith in Christ and has been baptized, is regarded by the churches as *initiated*: and it is on this ground alone that he is regarded as eligible to membership in any church. But it is evident that this ceremony of *initiation*, to be a valid one, must be performed according to the law of the kingdom, and by those properly authorized to administer that law. Now if baptism be the door of entrance, it is certain that the unbaptized have not come in. They being out of the kingdom can have no authority in it. They cannot stand outside of the kingdom and thrust others in. No organization in the world would be so silly as to leave the work of making and initiating its members to those who refused, themselves, to be initiated. There must be a profession of faith, and this not made to the world, not to some priest of Jupiter, nor to some lodge of Odd Fellows, or Division of the Sons of Temperance; not to a class-leder or even to a society of good men. It must be made to a *Church of Christ*, or to *some one duly authorized* by a church to receive it, and him, in consequence of it. Then there must be immersion, performed, not by a Jewish priest, or a disciple of Joe Smith, or a mere pious man without legal authority; but it must be by one *authorized under the laws of the kingdom* to administer it. Any act of baptism which is not a recognition

of the person baptized as henceforth one of the members of the visible kingdom, is deficient in the *very thing which is essential to the design* of baptism. If it does not *initiate* him, it has failed of its object, and he is no more ready to be received into a particular church than if it had not been performed. Now when a baptism is performed by a Pedobaptist, it is *designed* to initiate him into a *Pedobaptist society*. It is so understood, both by the administrator and the subject of it. It does what it is intended to do and nothing more; and when a *Baptist Church* recognizes it as a valid baptism, she of necessity recognizes that society as *equally with herself* a part of the visible kingdom. They stand on the same ground and possess the same authority.

This *design* is, of itself, enough to invalidate the performance. So much so that if Eld. Fuller himself—a regular Baptist minister, and, as he thinks, *twice* baptized—if even he should baptize a person with the express understanding that the ceremony was *performed for the purpose* of making him a member of a Methodist society, I would not, nor do I believe that any Baptist church in all the land would recognize it as valid baptism.

Thus much for "the design." It was not as Eld. Fuller seems to suppose, *merely* to symbolize a burial or a washing away of sins. The Lord selected and commanded a ceremony of initiation which did indeed most beautifully set forth the fact that the initiated was now under the most solemn obligations to live a new life, by representing his former self as dead and buried, and to be pure in heart, by representing him free from all defilement. But these were not the practical result

to be accomplished; that was to take his into the visible kingdom of Christ, and make him *externally* and *formally* a felow-citizen with the saints of Christ. It was just the equivalent of the oath of allegiance by which a foreigner becomes a citizen among ourselves. He may be a good man: he may love his adopted country; he may be ready to lose his life in her defence, but he is not legally a citizen: he can exercise no privileges of citizenship; he cannot vote or be entrusted with the management of public affairs, until he has been *formally* invested with the citizenship according to law. Now suppose in his ignorance he should apply to another foreigner to make him a citizen, and this other through ignorance or design should administer to him the oath in the very form, and words required by the law. Would this make him a legal citizen? Would the judge of the election permit him to *vote?* Not at all. He must take the oath, not by himself alone; not before another stranger like himself, not even before a native born citizen, but it must, to be a valid initiation, be administered by a citizen properly qualified and duly authorized to receive his declaration of allegiance and to receive him as a citizen in consequence of his having made it.

3. But here is another thought: No Baptist Church could consistently receive and sanction as valid any official act performed even by one who had been a Baptist minister, after such minister had been *deposed* from his office and *excluded from the Church.*

This, I presume, will not be disputed even by Eld. Fuller. But if the church cannot sanction the official act of a *baptized* man who is no longer a Church mem-

ber, how can she sanction the same act performed by an *un*baptized man who never had been a Church member? Now she would at once depose and exclude a Baptist minister for sprinkling babies as baptism, and if the Methodists or Presbyterians, whose official acts she is required to sanction, had been within her jurisdiction, she would long ago have disowned them and repudiated their acts: yet merely *because they have been beyond the reach of her discipline*, she is to receive as valid and sanction their official work as though it had been done by a minister in good standing in her own communion. I say, No! never! never! never! What a baptized man may not do when he has been excluded from the Church, and *un*baptized man, habitually guilty of the same acts for which the other was excluded, cannot do.

We have, therefore, first the fact, that the commission which Eld. Fuller says contains the only authority to baptize, was given only to the baptized. Second, we have the fact that in the whole Scripture record there is no account given of any others but the baptized performing the ordinance. There is not even ground for an inference that they did so. Third, we have the fact that baptism was the initiating ordinance by which one was brought within the kingdom; and unless the initiatory ordinance—the oath of allegiance of the kingdom—could be administered by those who were not in it themselves, the *necessary* inference is, that those who gave it must have first received it. Fourth, we have the fact that if a baptized minister were guilty of such acts as Pedobaptist ministers habitually perform, no Baptist Church would think of sanctioning

his official acts, or could do it without the sacrifice of all regard to order; and unless the fact that these ministers are unbaptized gives validity to acts which could not be recognized as valid if done by a baptized minister *of the same character* and holding the same sentiments, we must conclude that the act is not only irregular, but null and void.

Now, what does Eld. Fuller present against this array of facts and arguments?

He says that if a man should chance to be informally or illegally *married*, it would be a sad thing to count the marriage null, and so bastardize the children. To this I have only to answer, that if the *law* requires marriage to be performed by one possessing certain qualifications, and I shall discover that the man who married me did not possess them, or that from any other cause I have *not been legally married*, I will, with my wife's consent, get *married over again*, and be sure to have it rightly done. So I think would Eld. Fuller, or any other honest man, who meant to *obey the law* concerning matrimony.

But the *Commission* says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

True enough, and the same Commission says to the baptized preachers, Go *ye* and baptize them. Did Peter, when he executed this commission, and said, Repent and be baptized, leave them to go to the Jewish priests, or to the priests of Jupiter for the performance of the ceremony? It seems most likely that the apostles understood the Commission *almost* as well as Eld. Fuller, and if *they* did not send candidates out of the church for baptism, or receive those who had been immersed

by unbaptized priests or privates, the Commission cannot give authority for *us* to do so. Here seems to be the great difficulty in Eld. Fuller's mind. Baptism is commanded as a *personal* duty, and nothing is said of the administrator. "The administrator is never referred to as affecting the validity of the ordinance." But yet he admits that the Commission—the *sole* authority to baptize, was given to those who had been baptized themselves. He clearly proves in his book that all who went about preaching the Commission and baptizing must have been baptized: and neither he, nor any one else, that I have ever heard of, pretends that the authority to baptize was scattered promiscuously over the world, and that one was as competent to do it as another. No one pretends that there is either precept or example to authorize its administration by any but the baptized, while he and all admit, that by both precept and example, it is plain as any fact can be, that it was to be done, and was done *by the baptized.* What more does he want? What more can he have to show who were to be the administrators? And yet in view of all this, he intimates that to insist that he who administers baptism must have been himself baptized, is "*superstition going beyond popery itself.*" If so, then the Lord himself was thus *superstitious*, for it is certain, by Eld. Fuller's own showing, that he insisted on this. If so, then each of the apostles was as superstitious as his Master, for it is evident they never recognized the baptism of the unbaptized. And for myself, while I can stand with them, I do not care a straw whether I have the approbation of the Pope or not.

But if the qualifications of the administrator of *baptism* cannot affect the validity of the ordinance, no more can the qualifications of the administrator of the *Lord's Supper* affect its validity as a church ordinance, *for there is less said of the administrator of this ordinance than of the other.* If one, not a church member, may administer *baptism*, he may surely with equal propriety administer the *Supper*, though he cannot partake of it; and when any Baptist Church is without a pastor, and desire to celebrate the Supper, they may send to the Methodist or Presbyterian minister to come and officiate for them. The Pedobaptist preacher cannot *eat*, but he can break the bread for *them*—he cannot drink, but he can pour the wine for *them;* and such participation, though *irregular*, would be valid, and should be sanctioned by *all the churches*, if the parties are *satisfied*, forsooth. Nay, more, if it be true that the qualifications of the administrator cannot affect the validity of baptism, then Baptist ministers may call on those of Pedobaptist Churches to take the labor of immersion off their hands, or at least assist in its performance, and *the churches* must sanction the act. For surely, if an immersion by a Pedobaptist to initiate one into a *Methodist* society is valid baptism, an immersion by the same person would be equally valid, if done to make one *a Baptist.* Yet I apprehend that even Eld. Fuller, with all his persuasive eloquence, would find it impossible to induce even his own church to sanction such a baptism performed at his request. He would not dare even to suggest it.

And again, if a Pedobaptist minister, in the opinion of Baptist churches, can administer the ordinances in

a Scriptural and valid manner, why should they be ordained on becoming Baptist ministers? If they can confer Scriptural baptism without baptism or membership, they can surely confer it without ordination; and as there is less said of the administrator of the Supper than there is of the administrator of baptism, they can equally administer that ordinance. It follows that there can be no necessity for their ordination, and the churches should not insist upon it.

And further still, if it be true that the qualifications of the administrator cannot at all affect the validity of the ordinances; if he need not be a Baptist minister, or a Baptist church member, no more need he be a member or a minister in any religious society. A member of a division of the Sons of Temperance can confer it with the same propriety as a member of a Methodist society, or a priest in a Masonic chapter, as well as a Methodist bishop. Nay, baptism conferred by the veriest infidel in all the land would be as valid, and must be sanctioned by the churches, as though it had been done according to Christ's commission, and under his authority, as exercised through his churches. Surely Eld. Fuller did not think what he was saying. It is true, baptism is a personal duty, and so is the profession of faith that goes before it, and when the candidate has found the proper persons to listen to his *profession*, he will have no difficulty in learning who is to baptize him.

But if, says Eld. Fuller, we require that the minister shall have been *baptized*, "*Where will our requirements cease?*" Must he be sound in faith? Must he be this, or that, or the other thing? I wonder that any

one should be embarrassed by such difficulties as these. We surely ought to know that for a Baptist Church to recognize ones official acts he must be a Baptist minister in good and regular standing in some Baptist church. It is *not* because he has been *baptized* that we recognize his official acts, but because he is a member and a minister duly authorized to perform them; and when he ceases to be either the one or the other, those churches who know the facts, must and will, if they be faithful to their duty, disown him as a brother, and repudiate his official acts if he should continue to perform them. The validity of his official acts does not depend on his *baptism*, or on his *piety*, or on his *orthodoxy*, but *on the authority which he has received from the Church*. So long as he retains this authority, therefore, his acts are valid, and when it is withdrawn the churches must regard them as invalid, as they must the official acts of one who has never received such authority.*

But one thought more and I have done. If that alone be valid baptism, says Elder F., which is administered by one who has been himself baptized, there is no such thing as valid baptism. For who can say that somewhere in the lapse of eighteen hundred years there may not a link be wanting in the chain of our baptismal succession. And so because there may have been such irregularities in the past as he is advocating, we must sanction them now. Because some church may at some time in past ages, ignorantly or inadvertently have

*If any say that every male member has authority to baptize by virtue of his membership, it will still hold good that no one can have it, who is not a member.

given her sanction to an irregular and invalid baptism; does Elder Fuller think, or can any Baptist think, that therefore, every church ought now knowingly and wilfully to sanction every such case that may come before her?

To this argument of his I have first to say that lightly as Eld. Fuller talks of the baptismal succession, it will be hard for him to show that it does not exist. As he makes the want of it the basis of his argument, it devolves on him to prove the fact, (if it be a fact), that it is wanting. As his argument hangs on that *broken link* it is for him to *find* and *show* that broken link. The presumption is that the chain is perfect. If baptism is essential to church membership, and Christ declared his church as an institution, should continue to the end of time, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it, then it is to be taken for granted, in the absence of proof to the contrary that baptized churches have continued in regular succession from that day to this, and any particular baptized church must be regarded in the absence of proof to the contrary, as in the succession. Elder Fuller may doubt it, but for myself I cannot help believing that the Lord has kept his word, and consequently there have been all the time, as there are now, regular churches of baptized believers. It does not matter whether I can *trace* them all the time or not, I will take their existence for granted upon the Saviour's promise that they *should* exist until some one will show the day in which it could be said that they were all destroyed, and that either by violence or craft the gates of hell had prevailed. And while I take this for granted, I take for granted also, that the

church that baptized Eld. Fuller, and that to which I belong, and every other of the same faith and order, with those established by the apostles, have received valid and scriptural baptism by a scriptural administrator. I am entitled to do so until the contrary shall be shown. God in his providence has preserved his churches in all that was essential, and one essential is right baptism. He can perhaps show here and there an irregular baptism, but he cannot show that these irregularities have been *perpetuated.* Roger Williams' little society, claiming to be a Baptist Church, but without regular baptism, died out in two or three years, and no one can show that any Baptist minister or church received baptism from them or by their authority. There were those in England after the so called reformation, who *contended that it would be right and lawful to baptize themselves,* and so begin anew. But there is no proof that they did so, for we know they sent to the Continent to receive a baptism which would have no suspicion concerning its validity. And thus, I do not doubt, it has ever been. God has preserved the scriptural baptism in all that is essential. And if a baptized administrator is essential, (as we have proved it is), then he has never permitted the children of his visible Kingdom to be thrust into it by those who would not enter in themselves.

But while I might take this ground, I need not, and will not do it for the purpose of meeting Eld. Fuller's argument. I am willing that he should have it all his own way. And I simply ask him, as one who loves the peace, and purity, and *order* of the Christian Churches

to answer this one question. If a church be *now* from the necessity of the case, obliged to regard as valid and regular some baptismal act performed in the long gone past, and about which there may now be good reason to doubt whether it was every way correctly done, must she in consequence, regard as valid, and sanction those baptisms performed in her own time, and which she *knows* to be illegal and unscriptural, concerning which there is not even a *pretence* that the administrators were qualified, as Brother Fuller says the first administrators were? If so what is church order worth? If so there is an end to order. The church may just as well yield all her claim to the divinely appointed guardian of Christ's ordinances. And any one, whether in the church or not, whether authorized by church authority or not, may take it on himself to perform Christian baptism, and the church must recognize and sanction the act, and treat him in this particular as though he were a member and a minister, because, forsooth, some hundred or some thousand years ago the like thing had been done. Surely if Elder Fuller had not "*written in haste*" he could not have failed to see this consequence of his argument. And had he seen it he surely must have felt that it was a most important duty of *every Church of Jesus Christ* to take the same course to "*correct this irregularity*," which he thought it so essential for himself to take when he became a Baptist. I am glad that the author prefaced his letter by his personal history. If "*actions speak louder than words*," as the old proverb says, then Eld. Fuller, *rebaptized*, presents a stronger argument against his letter than I can do. Let the churches hear him, not as he sits and theorises in his

easy chair, writing this letter to his friend, but let them hear him as he calls out to them from beneath the waves of Jordan, *acting out* the earnest faith of an honest heart, and saying in trumpet tones, "THIS IS THE WAY TO CORRECT THE IRREGULARITY OF PEDOBAPTIST IMMERSIONS."

CHAPTER V.

THE VALIDITY OF BAPTISM ADMINISTERED BY AN UNBAPTIZED EVANGELIST. BY ELD. JOHNSON, OF S. C.

In my fourth number on the Evangelists, two questions came up for consideration. The first was answered in the same number. The second was postponed, which is as follows: "Has the unbaptized Evangelist authority to baptize believers?"

In discussing this subject, I shall necessarily repeat some things that I have said before.

The Saviour said unto his apostles, in the solemn hour of his leaving them—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; Go ye, therefore, and make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In conformity with these directions, Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, and made about three thousand disciples, who were baptized, and added to them, the hundred and twenty who were all with one accord, in one place, on that memorable day. They were not added

to them by baptism, but were *first* baptized, and *then* added. Philip, the evangelist, went down to Samaria, preached and baptized those that believed. Shortly after, we read of a church in Samaria. A great persecution arose against the church of Jerusalem, which dispersed all the members, except the apostles. They that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word; and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number turned to the Lord. In a little time, Paul and Barnabas were sent upon a missionary tour, through those regions, and found *many* churches, over whom they ordained elders. Peter went to Cornelius' house, where a company was assembled, and preached to them. The Holy Spirit fell upon them all, and he commanded them to be baptized, and a church was formed at Cæsarea, the residence of the centurion. Paul baptized believing Corinthians. We thus see that apostles and evangelists—*Preachers of the Gospel*—are the baptizers of believers. But these were themselves baptizd. How, then, can a baptism by one, himself unbaptized, be valid? Light will be thrown on this subject by first ascertaining whether one can be an evangelist, or a preacher of the gospel, who has not been baptized. This is a question of fact.

It is too obvious to need proof, that Jesus Christ makes the evangelist or preacher, and not man. It is equally obvious, that the only mode in which we ascertain a preacher is by his qualification and desire for the office. John the Baptist did no miracle to *prove* his appointment to the ministry, yet he was a preacher of Christ, though he did not *as fully* preach the gospel of Christ, as it was preached after His resurrection. We

know that John was not baptized, and yet, by his qualifications he was recognized and received.

Martin Luther, John Knox, George Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards, preached the gospel of Christ with a power and success, unsurpassed by any preachers since the Apostle's day. *Who* made them such preachers? *Who* blessed their labors so wonderfully? Not man, but the Lord Jesus, the King in Zion. And there have been thousands of unbaptized preachers in Pedobaptist societies, who have faithfully and successfully preached the gospel of Christ. Can we say that they are not preachers of the Lord's making? Surely not. Have we not endorsed men as preachers, though unbaptized, by asking them into our pulpits, and receiving persons for baptism, and afterward into our churches, who were awakened and converted to God through their agency or instrumentality? Did we so endorse them as made by man? No. But as made by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus and His Father. Now if our King has dispensed with the baptism of these preachers or evangelists, whom He has put into the ministry, and has blessed their labors in doing *His* work, on what ground can we object to this exercise of His sovereign will? And if He commands His preachers to baptize believers upon a profession of their faith in Him; and those whom He has made such, preach and baptize believers though themselves unbaptized, on what ground can we refuse to receive *their work* in *baptizing*, as well as in *preaching*, and in *conversion*, since it was by his Spirit's influence that they did both? That Paul regarded baptizing as a work inferior to preaching, is obvious, as he says, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and

Gaius, and the household of Stephanus. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

That baptized and unbaptized evangelists do preach the gospel, and that by means of their preaching, souls are alike savingly converted to God by his blessing on their labors, cannot be doubted. If one converted by the preaching of an unbaptized Evangelist, should apply for baptism to a baptized Evangelist, would he not, if satisfied of his fitness for the ordinance, administer it to him? And would not this one, upon application for admission into a Baptist church, be received upon his faith and baptism? Most assuredly. Now surely conversion is a greater work than baptism. Well! The Lord, not man, makes the evangelist, and commissions him to make and baptize disciples. If the work in conversion be valid, why not the work in baptism also? Especially as the work in conversion is the greater of the two, and the same authority commands the same officer to do both.

There is another view of this subject worthy of attention. A distinction is made by our Lord between His kingdom and His churches on this earth. To Pilate He said: "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." The Saviour evidently meant, that his kingdom, though extending over this whole earth, was not of a worldly nature, being governed neither by worldly principles, nor sustained by worldly measures. To the apostles He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And then with kingly authority he commanded them to go into all the world, and make, and baptize disciples, adding, "And lo! I am with you alway even unto the end of the world."

Both the language to Pilate and the commission to the apostles were spoken before any churches existed; and therefore the kingdom of Christ and his churches are not identical. Of the kingdom the apostles were the chief officers; next, the seventy disciples, and now the evangelists. The world is their field. Itinerating, as heralds of the cross, as they go, they preach the Lord Jesus, and wheresoever any become his disciples, they immerse them into the name of the Triune God; and these immersed disciples are the materials of which the churches are formed. It thus evidently appears that evangelists are officers of the kingdom of Christ.

When a sinner is truly converted to God, he is a spiritual subject of Christ's kingdom. By baptism he becomes visibly such. As Christ only makes and appoints the evangelist, if He is pleased to dispense with his submission to the ordinance of baptism, it is His sovereign act; and we have no right to object to His act. The evangelist, who comes bearing the broad seal of his Master's appointment in the qualifications by which he is to be known, should be received, and his work also, when done in obedience to the commission of his Lord. Hence the immersion of a professed believer in Jesus Christ, administered by an unbaptized evangelist is a valid baptism.

It is urged as an objection against the validity of such a baptism, that the baptizer would have a right to administer the Lord's Supper to believers also, and hence we should have such administrators brought into the churches as partakers, likewise of the ordinance, and thus mixed communion would be introduced amongst us. Let it be observed in reply, that a right to baptism and

the Lord's Supper, stands upon different grounds. Faith in Christ gives the right to baptism. Church membership—the right to the Lord's Table. The evangelist is commanded to baptize, but not to administer the Lord's Supper. Baptism is committed to ministerial hands—the Lord's Supper is not. Baptism is a personal, individual ordinance; the supper is a social church ordinance. The one is the ordinance of the kingdom of Christ; the other, of the churches of Christ. The evangelist is an officer of the kingdom, not of a church of Christ. An evangelist may become a bishop of a church. and thus be her presiding officer. An unbaptized evangelist cannot become an officer of a church of Christ, for he cannot be a member of a church. He, therefore, can neither preside at the table of the Lord, nor be a partaker of its rich fare. There is, then, no danger of the introduction of mixed communion into our churches, on the ground of the validity of a baptism under the hands of an unbaptized evangelist.

The only objection against the validity of a baptism by an unbaptized evangelist, that has any force, is, that he himself is unbaptized. But this objection lies with equal force against his authority to preach, which is a much higher work than to baptize. It lies also with equal force against the claim of any unbaptized professor of religion to be a Christian; so that, to carry out the principal, we should not receive an unbaptized evangelist as a preacher of the Gospel into our pulpits, or recognize him in any way as a minister of Christ; neither should we recognize any unbaptized person as a Christian. Are we prepared for such a course of treat-

ment to all other denominations of professed believers in our Lord Jesus Christ?

After all, the essence of true spiritual gospel baptism consists in the immersion in water, of a spiritual believer, upon a profession of faith in Christ, by whomsoever the ordinance may be administered. After such an immersion, its repetition would be another baptism, for which there is no authority in the scripture. The requirement of an immersed administrator as indispensable, then, throws us back upon the apostolical succession, so that no Baptist could prove the validity of his own baptism, unless he could go back through a line of baptized administrators to one of the apostles. And let me ask—through what line of ministerial ancestry will he undertake his task?

Roger Williams was ordained in the Church of England. He afterwards embraced Baptist principles. Banished from Massachusetts for his peculiar views, he settled in Providence, Rhode Island. There he baptized Mr. Holliman, who had embraced the same views, and then Mr. Holliman baptized Mr. Williams, who afterwards founded a Baptist Church in that city. And the extraordinary and blessed results that have followed, will be fully understood in eternity only. What Baptist would go back some two hundred years, and undo the mighty work that followed the labors of Roger Williams, on the ground, that though a preacher of the gospel, he had no right to baptize, because he was himself unbaptized, and therefore his baptism of Holliman and all other baptisms resulting from that, were null and void.

W.

REVIEW OF THE ABOVE.

In the discussion of questions of this kind it is essential that we have some settled and admitted principles upon which we may base our arguments. If there be at the bottom of our reasonings only the loose and ever-shifting sand, it matters not how firmly our conclusions may be built upon our premises, for the premises themselves have no stability, and the whole fabric will tumble together into ruin. It will avail us nothing to tie our vessel to a floating wreck. If we should, we will not know where we are and whither we are drifting. Our first object, therefore, must be to fix upon some settled and admitted truths which we can make the basis of our reasonings. Such truths I take to be the following, viz.: 1st. ALL *the authority which* ANY ONE *can have to baptize must be derived from the Word of God.* To the Bible, and the Bible only, we must all appeal. Whether baptism be regarded as an ordinance of the Church, or of the Kingdom of Christ, it is equally an ordinance of the *New Testament.* To this, and this alone, we go to learn who are to be baptized; and it is from this, and this alone, that we must learn who are authorized to confer baptism. If we leave the written Word, and permit ourselves to be decided by the dictates of uninspired reason, uninspired tradition, or uninspired conjectures as to what is right and authoritative in the Kingdom of Christ, we are, at once, at sea

without a pilot or a compass, and know not whither we may float.

2d. If the above be admitted (and we do not think that "W." or any other Baptist will think of disputing it), it follows, that *if the New Testament has not given authority to "unbapized Evangelists" to baptize, then "unbaptized Evangelists" have no such authority.*

And here, it seems to us, the whole discussion might be, at once, cut off by asking one simple question: Is there any such a being as an *"unbaptized Evangelist"* recognized in the New Testament? Is he ever described? Is he ever mentioned? Is he ever alluded to as having either a present or a prospective existence?

If he is not known to the Scriptures, it follows, of course, that he has received no authority from them. Now let "W." or any one else, take his Bible and his Concordance, English or Greek, and make diligent search from the first of Matthew to the last of Revelations, and if he can find the slightest allusion to any unbaptized Evangelist, in the sense that "W." uses the terms, he will, in our opinion, be entitled to take rank with the discoverers of things before unknown. This unbaptized Evangelist, the reader will observe, to accord with "W.'s" description of him, must be *"an officer in the* [visible] *Kingdom of Christ;"* yet he is one who *"can not be a member of a Church of Christ,"* and can *"neither preside at the table of the Lord, nor be a partaker of its rich fare."* He is one who is authorized to preach to others that believers must be baptized according to Christ's law, yet he himself claims to be a believer, and will not be baptized. He is authorized to make disciples, and teach them to observe all that Christ com-

manded, yet he himself will not observe the very first of all the things which Christ commanded to a believer: "Believe and be baptized."

But for the fear that we might be thought unwilling to do full justice to all the arguments by which "W." has attempted to sustain his positions, we would stop here and wait with patience until some one shall show us the chapter and the verse where this strange compound of faith and disobedience, having authority from Christ to preach what he will not practice, may be found. If he himself can not be discovered in the Word, we surely need not waste our time in looking for his *"authority to baptize believers."*

But if we should discover the "unbaptized Evangelist" to be a veritable existence, clearly recognized as having life and breath, and holding office in Christ's Kingdom, as that Kingdom is described and bounded in the Word of God, then we will have this other question to decide, viz.: What are the duties which the New Testament imposes upon this *"officer of the Kingdom,"* or which it authorizes him to perform? He may be an officer, and yet not have, by virtue of his office, any authority to baptize. Deacons are officers, yet it does not certainly appear that it was any part of the duty of their office to administer baptism.

Here, therefore, is the burden which devolves on "W." before he can make good his position. He says that unbaptized Evengelists have authority to baptize believers. We simply deny.

It then devolves on him to show that there is in the Kingdom of Christ an *"officer"* called an *"unbaptized Evangelist,"* who is not known to the Scriptures, and

who, of course, has no *scriptural* authority; or else that this "*unbaptized Evangelist*" IS *known to the Scriptures, and* DID *receive "authority to baptize" from Christ*, as the source of all authority in his Kingdom. As we regard the Kingdom of Christ as a scriptural kingdom, concerning which we have no other source of information as to who are members of it, or who are officers in it, or what are the privileges or duties of members or officers, we must confine our investigations to the teachings of THE WRITTEN WORD; and if he will not open the flood-gates to all manner of error and superstition, he must submit to meet us on the BIBLE PLATFORM, and be content to abide by the decisions of the Word of God. He must therefore show us in the Word where his unbaptized Evangelist is found, and where, and when, and how he received his commission from the Lord of the Kingdom to baptize believers. "*To the Law and to the Testimony; if he speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in him.*" Let us then inquire, is there any "*precept*," any *commandment* in the Word requiring "unbaptized Evangelists" to baptize believers? Was the great commission, which is commonly thought to contain the only authority which any person has to baptize any body, given to "*unbaptized Evengelists?*" "W." makes no pretension that it was. Unbaptized Evangelists can not act under *this* commission, for, if they be believers, it requires *them* to be baptized. With what face can they preach, "believe, and *be baptized*," when they despise and repudiate the ordinance?

But "W." says "*John was not baptized, and yet by his qualifications he was recognized and received.*" Excepting only this case of John, he does not present from the

Scriptures, any shadow of authority conferred on any unbaptized man to baptize believers. There was no command given to any such to do it. There is no example of any such who did it. No other dared to do it; nor would John had Christ not given him a personal commission. As an unbaptized baptizer, John stands alone. This is an admitted fact. It was impossible but that *some* unbaptized man should *begin* the work. And Christ sent John to do it. He had a *special commission* to introduce the rite, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And if "W.'s" "unbaptized Evangelists" have a similar commission from Christ to introduce the rite where it does not exist, his case may be referred to as a precedent for their's; but certainly not otherwise. The previous submission to baptism *could* not be required as a qualification in John—because there was no one who could confer it upon John. After it became possible to receive it, however, Christ would not exempt even himself from its reception. When John began to baptize there was *no law* requiring *him* to be baptized. He was no rejector of Christ's ordinance, as every unbaptized Evangelist now must be, and must then have been, had he existed. The command, therefore, which authorized John, is no authority to any other unbaptized person to baptize believers.

But failing of precept or example, have we any *fair and reasonable inference.* Here "W." makes a better showing, "Baptism" is of less importance than "preaching," and hence we may infer that all who are authorized to *preach* are also authorized to *baptize.*

We might grant this, and the question would still be undecided. For it would still remain to be determined

whether, *according to the scriptures*, any unbaptized man is authorized to *preach*. But it is not true that the right to baptize is of necessity included in the right to preach, even though preaching may be more important than baptizing. The greater does not include the less, except the less be a constituent part of the greater. A man may be authorized to act as Governor, and yet have no authority to receive taxes, although his office is more important than that of Tax-Collector. Christ might have authorized thousands of people to preach whom he did not authorize to baptize. Some people think he did. They say that all who *hear* the gospel are duly authorized to preach it. "Let him that heareth, say come." But they do not pretend that every man who hears the gospel is authorized to "baptize believers." Some people say that preaching the gospel is giving religious instruction, and that it is the privilege and the duty of every one who is competent to do so, to give religious instruction. Yet they do not pretend that every one who has the capacity to teach another something about religion, is on that account authorized to "baptize believers."

If, however, it be said that the commission to preach and to baptize was given to the same persons, and that consequently all who are authorized to preach, are by the same commission authorized to baptize. We grant it. But then, this joint commission was not given to the unbaptized. It conferred on such, no authority either to preach or to baptize, or do any thing else but to believe and *be baptized*. If this commission, therefore, is the *only* authority for preaching, it is certain that they have no authority either to preach or to bap-

tize. It is not enough for "W." to show that some preachers baptized, and that an unbaptized man might preach. He must show that *unbaptized* preachers were authorized to baptize. Let him show in the Word of God, a commission authorizing one who would not himself be baptized, to go and baptize others. Until he has done this, his argument stands thus:

Baptized preachers are authorized to baptize believers. Unbaptized Evangelists are preachers.

Therefore, unbaptized Evangelists are authorized to baptize believers.

A school girl would laugh at such logic, unless it were given as an example of false reasoning.

If unbaptized Evangelists have any scriptural authority either to preach or to baptize, they certainly must derive it from some other passage besides the commission, since this, it is admitted by all parties, was given only to the baptized.

We come now to "W.'s" great argument. The Evangelist is an officer, not of a church, but of the *Kingdom* of Christ. The churches are one thing, and the Kingdom is another. *"Of the Kingdom, the Apostles were the chief officers next the seventy Disciples, and now the Evangelists."* Let us admit all this, and what will follow? The Kingdom of Christ, as he established it, was designed to have a set of officers called *"Evangelists."* What of it? These Evangelists could preach and baptize. Well, what of it? We freely grant all this. But then we ask, were they *"unbaptized* Evangelists?" If they *were*, then the case is decided. Then he has found the thing we have been looking for. Then we have an *unbaptized Evangelist* in the scriptures, and learn what

he was authorized to do. But until it is determined that these Evangelists were *unbaptized*, we have made no progress whatever.

Till then, our argument stands thus:

Baptized Evangelists were officers in the visible Kingdom of Christ, who were authorized to baptize believers, and are so recognized in the scriptures. Therefore, *unbaptized Evangelists* who were *not* officers in that Kingdom, and had no authority to do any thing, are now authorized to baptize believers. The very point upon which his whole conclusion rests, he does not even attempt to decide. He does not so much as try to prove that Philip, the only example of these Evangelists whom he mentions, was an *unbaptized* preacher of the gospel. He does not pretend that Philip "*could not be a member of a church,*" *preside at the table of the Lord, or partake of its rich fare.*

It is a matter of no consequence at all to the argument before us, whether baptism is an ordinance of the church or of the Kingdom, or whether the Evangelist is an officer of the church or of the Kingdom—unless it shall first be proved that *baptism* was not just as much a prerequisite to membership and office-holding in the Kingdom as it was in the church. And "W.," so far from attempting to do this, expressly recognizes baptism as the initiatory rite, the door of entrance into the Kingdom—though not into the churches. And now if it be true that baptism is the initiatory rite of Christ's visible Kingdom, and if it be true that the members of Christ's visible Kingdom are all baptized persons, and that the "unbaptized Evangelist" is an officer in that Kingdom, then it follows that he is an officer

of a Kingdom in which he is not a member. It follows that Christ has placed the great initiatory ordinance of his Kingdom in the hands of those who have so great a contempt for *it*, or so little regard for *him*, that they will not submit to it themselves. He has given the door of entrance into his Kingdom into the hands of those who will not enter it. He has the right to do such things if he should choose, but "W." has not shown us in the record, any testimony that he has done so.

But some one may say the "unbaptized Evangelist" is a member and an officer in the "*invisible* Kingdom." But the invisible has no organization, no ordinances and no officers. But if we suppose that he is the officer of the invisible Kingdom, we shall only be driven back to the Word, to see when, and where, and how it was that Christ appointed him and gave him authority to "baptize believers."

But "W." says No. We need not go to the Scriptures at all. We find the evidence of their authority in their *work*.' If Christ is willing to dispense with their baptism, why need we be troubled? And Christ shows that he is pleased to dispense with their baptism by blessing their labors. His Spirit calls them to preach the gospel. They do preach it, and souls are saved. Witness Whitfield and Knox, Wesley and Edwards, Calvin and Luther, and a host like them. Who will deny that Christ has sent them? Who will deny that Christ, the King, is pleased to dispense with baptism in such holy men as these? We only reply, that although Christ may see fit to dispense with their baptism, he has not authorized his churches to do so. He is sovereign; He does what He will. We are His subjects, and must be

ruled by *His law*. The churches are the executive in his Kingdom, and they must execute the law. *They have no rule for their official conduct* AS HIS CHURCHES BUT HIS WRITTEN WORD. And if they can not find *there*, that they are to receive the baptisms of all those who may be instrumental in converting souls, then they are not at liberty to receive them. If "W." will show us such instructions in the Word, we yield the case. To the Law and to the Testimony—show us the commandment.

But let us, for a moment, grant all that "W." contends for on this point. What will be the logical result? The argument stands thus: The conversion of a sinner is more important than his baptism. These men have converted sinners, and therefore they are authorized to baptize them. "If their work in conversion be valid," says "W.," "why not the work of baptism also," and "especially as the work of conversion is the greater of the two, and the same authority commands the same officer to do both?"

We have been accustomed to regard conversion as *God's* work, and have supposed that when the churches received it, they received it as his work, and not the preacher's, and we suppose that "W." means only to say that they were instruments in the hand of God in the conversion of these men.—And now the question is, whether, according to the Scriptures, any person who is the means of anothers' conversion, or of the conversion of many persons, has on that account the "*authority to baptize believers?*" Has he even the authority to baptize his own converts? Grant that he has and see where we will stand. That gentle girl who plead so earnestly

with her father to turn and live, is authorized, if her sex do not forbid, to lead him into the water and bury him in baptism, and the church must receive her work in baptism as it would her work in conversion. That young man, just now himself converted, and who has yet made no profession of religion, but has gone to his former companions in sin and warned them of their danger, and they have turned to God, is an authorized administrator of baptism. No church would refuse to receive his work of conversion, this is a greater work than baptism; how, then, can they refuse to regard him as one authorized by the Scriptures to baptize believers? Nay, more. There is a wicked wretch, who prays God to damn his own soul. His companion is struck with wonder at the prayer—feels that there is danger in such companionship—prays God to *save his* soul, and he is saved. Now is not this swearer authorized to baptize believers? The church will receive his work in conversion. Why not in baptism? And "after all," in the language of "W.," "the essence of true spiritual gospel baptism consists in the immersion in water of a spiritual believer upon a profession of faith in Christ, by *whomsoever* the ordinance may be administered."

"W." doubtless thinks so, or he would not have said it. But genuine churches of Jesus Christ will be very slow to admit that every one whose efforts have been blessed of God to the conversion of souls is on that account authorized to "baptize believers."

God may bless his Word in the mouth of a child or an infidel to the conversion of men, but in doing so he does not commission them to administer the ordinances of his Kingdom. And so he may bless it *largely* in the

mouth of an Edwards, a Whitfield, or a Wesley, and yet, by doing so, confer on them no authority to administer a rite which they will not receive, or give his churches any permission to lay aside his *written instructions* in regard to the reception of members.

To say, as "W." does, that any objection to receiving one's baptism, lies with equal force against his authority to preach, is simply to assert, that none are by the Scriptures authorized to *preach* but those who are *also authorized to baptize.* If this be true, it only proves that the churches of Christ should no more recognize the unbaptized as preachers than they should as baptizers. And it must be true, if the commission were given only to the baptized, unless there be *some other authority* for *them to preach.* Whether there be or not, we do not now inquire.

To say that "it lies equally against the claim of any unbaptized persons *to be a Christian*, is simply to assert, that if we deny that Christ has authorized any one to *baptize believers* before he has himself been baptized as a believer, we must also deny that he has authorized any one to believe on him before he has been baptized as a believer. It is strange that any one who thinks should write such a sentence.

Christ says, believe, then be baptized, then preach and baptize, as you were baptized, those who believe as you believed.

In regard to Roger Williams and his Church, "W." asks, "What Baptist would be willing to go back two hundred years and undo all that mighty work that followed [its organization], on the ground that, though a preached of the Gospel, he had no right to baptize?"

We answer that nothing of the sort is necessary. The mighty result which has followed, has had no official connection with Roger Williams or his Church. That so-called Church lived a sickly life for a short time, and died. Other Baptist churches existed before it, and others have been formed since, without the slightest connection, direct or indirect, with that little anomalous affair which the Pedobaptists are so fond of designating the Mother of the Baptist denomination in America, but which every Baptist ought to know was an accidental and temporary organization, disconnected with the regular Baptist churches. We may freely admit that their baptism was null and void, without any serious detriment to our denominational order.*

But granting that baptism conferred by the unbaptized, and without church authority, is invalid, that is, unscriptural and illegal, must not every Baptist be able to trace his baptismal pedigree back to the Apostles before he can be assured that he has valid baptism. This question we have treated of in another chapter; and will here only say, that if this were necessary we had rather undertake to do it than to recognize the official authority in the Kingdom of Christ of men who are not in that Kingdom, and to whom Christ in his Word has given no authority. I dare not change Christ's laws for the sake of avoiding difficulties. If Christ, IN HIS WORD, authorized those who would not obey his law and be baptized, to baptize others in obedience to his law, although it would look very strange to me, I would

*See "Trials and Sufferings for Religious Liberty," which, by authentic documents, forever settles this question and should be understood by every Baptist.—ED.

not utter a word of dissent or remonstrance. He is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth him good. But since he has given them no such authority, I will not *knowingly* receive their baptisms, even though I may not be quite certain that they have not imposed them on me. They may put them upon me in the dark, but I will not receive them with my eyes wide open in the broad daylight. If it be true that some time or other, nobody knows just when or how, somebody or other, no one can say just who, in some place or other, nobody can say just where, conferred illegal baptism on some one now forgotten, and by bare posssibility my baptism may have been derived from this illegal source, I will rest under the uncertainty which this implies, rather than satisfy my doubts by admitting that any man has authority to baptize believers to whom Christ gave no such authority in the Scriptures. Must a Free Mason admit that initiation into Masonry, whether conferred in a Lodge or not, whether authorized by the Lodge or not, is a valid initiation, on the ground that there have been some spurious initiations and some illegal Lodges, and he cannot therefore *know* that either he himself or any one else has been *truly* initiated, unless upon the supposition that all who claim to confer the degree really do confer it. Will a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows feel that he is under the necessity of conceding that the initiatory rites of that order may be lawfully conferred by one not a member of it, because he cannot trace the official pedigree of those who were concerned in his initiation back to the founders of the order?

Does a Son of Temperance feel that he must be able to trace the official pedigree of those concerned in his initiation back, step by step, to the founders of the order in New York, and *prove* that there has not been an illegal or irregular link in the succession, before he can be assured that he is a Son of Temperance? When will men learn to use their common sense in matters of religion as they do in other things? But for a full examination of this point, see the Review of Waller in the next chapter, page 134.

CHAPTER VI.

ELDER WALLER AGAIN.

SINCE writing the foregoing reviews, we have seen another article from Elder Waller, published in the third volume of the Western Baptist Review, page 267. We should feel that we had failed to do what we desire, that is, to place before our readers the best and the most conclusive arguments that *have been* or *can be* offered in favor of the reception of Pedobaptist immersions, did we withhold this one. We seek for *truth*. We trust we are willing to embrace it wherever found, or by whomsoever presented. We wish our readers to have the truth, and are more than willing they should learn it from others if we have failed to find it or present it. The article is as follows:

THE VALIDITY OF BAPTISM BY PEDOBAPTIST MINISTERS.

TO ELDER J. L. WALLER.

TUSCUMBIA, ALA., Feb. 25, 1848.

Will you give your views on the following question, viz: *Is the immersion of a person in water into the*

name of the Trinity, upon a credible profession of faith in Christ, by a Pedobaptist minister who has not been immersed, a valid baptism? This question is agitating the Muscle Shoals Association very much, and unless some judicious plan can be devised to settle the difficulties amicably, no one can divine what will be the consequences. Your views on this subject, published in the Review, will be much valued.

Yours in Christ,

RICHARD B. BURLESON.

This question, substantially, has hitherto received an answer in the Review. Our views then expressed, by brethren to whose judgment we have ever been accustomed to bow with deference, were variously received—some condemning and some warmly approving them. It is a subject that has been mooted for centuries, and upon which much has been said and written—churches have been rent, the dearest ties of brotherhood have been sundered, and the blood of holy men has been shed—and still the mind of Christendom is as much unsettled as in the beginning. Recently it has called forth much discussion and elicited much feeling in certain portions of our country, especially among Baptists and Episcopalians. Knights of the quill have entered the lists with dauntless courage and fiery zeal. That confidence in their prowess and that anticipation of victory which they manifest, are amusing exhibitions of self-conceit—the empty vaporing of those uniformed respecting the skill and resources of the opposing combatants. Several times we have witnessed these redoubtable heroes, after a protracted rencounter with an imaginary foe, extend-

ing through the moiety of a dozen newspaper columns, rise in true warrior pomp, shake what they supposed their crimsoned steel, and proclaim that the conflict was ended, for, lo! they had laid the last enemy prostrate in the dust! Full often, during the past twelve calendar months, have we been asked to look and behold victory perched upon the lances of the warriors upon either side of this controversy. But we have seen nothing of the kind. The contest still rages. The clash of resounding arms still grates like harsh thunder upon our ears. For ourselves, we disclaim emphatically all pretensions to such skill in polemic warfare. We are encased in no such invulnerable armor. We frankly confess, that it is a field in which we expect to win no laurels. We see difficulties and dangers too thick and threatening to hope to pass through them uninjured. To speak plainly:—we have given this subject much attention, and have very carefully examined the arguments on every side, and hesitate not to say, that honest, upright and intelligent brethren may entertain different opinions. Hence we are disposed to distrust our own judgment. At least we cannot break fellowship with any who may entertain views differing from our own. Where honest differences of opinion may exist, every consideration of religion prompts to kindness and forbearance. Bigotry alone can, in such cases, excite strife and disunion.

We have ever maintained, that the question submitted by our correspondent should be left to the decision of the individual church, to be determined whenever a person, baptized as supposed above, presents himself for membership. Not many so baptized offer to unite with our churches. The question, therefore, is more hypotheti-

cal than practical. Associations certainly have nothing whatever to do with it. It is purely ecclesiastical, and associations have no jurisdiction in such cases. Our churches being independent and supreme, should not be molested in their adjudications upon such points. But unfortunately there are too many amongst us who have a disposition to disturb the peace of Zion—who will not admit in practice what they grant in theory—that the church is above the association, and responsible for her acts to no earthly tribunal. In the bounds of our acquaintance, we know churches in correspondence with the same association, who act differently on this question—one receiving and others rejecting such baptism—and there is no discord and dispute on the subject. We know churches in the same vicinage, and whose members constantly intermingle, acting in opposition in the case, and yet the most perfect fellowship exists. This is as it should be everywhere. Less than a year ago, we were in company with almost a score of the most able Baptist ministers in Kentucky. This matter was the subject of free and friendly conversation. The company were about equally divided in sentiment. But no one thought it ought to disturb the kind feelings of brethren towards each other; and we are sure that the brethren differing on this occasion as cordially esteem each other, as the brethren agreeing. Brethren imbued with the spirit of Christ will ever esteem such burdens the least and the lightest they have to bear for one another.

But to come directly to the matter in hand. The question presented by our correspondent may be simplified thus:—*Is the administrator necessary to the*

validity of baptism? Those who assume the affirmative maintain, that in order to valid baptism, three things are necessary, viz: the subject, the mode, and the administrator. The administrator, say they, must be a minister in good standing in a gospel church, who has himself been immersed: or rather, he must be a regular Baptist minister. This is a fair and plain statement of the case. The question submitted above supposes a proper subject and mode; the bone of strife relates to the administrator. The question thus cleared of all unnecessary obscurities, should be calmly met, and all the consequences flowing from the positions assumed by those on the affirmative, should be dispassionately examined and prayerfully embraced or rejected.

And the first consequence claiming our attention is, that if the administrator be necessary to the validity of baptism *now*, he was *always* necessary. This is a plain, common-sense deduction, which we presume no one will controvert. There has been no law given in relation to baptism since the canon of revelation received its final amen. If at any time since the introduction of Christianity into the world, an individual received baptism in a manner contrary to the divine enactments, it was invalid to all intents and purposes; for God has not given a law contrary to that in the Bible. The proposition of the affirmative is, that those who have been baptized by an improper administrator, are not baptized at all. If that is true now, it is always true. It assumes that a man cannot give what he has not received. If John Jones, who baptized John Smith, was baptized by an improper administrator, it follows that John Smith has no baptism, seeing that John Jones did not have it. And

so on, every administrator from now to the Apostles must be proved to be a proper administrator, or else all baptisms coming from him will be null and void. If any link in the succession be broken, the most skilful spiritual smith under the whole heavens cannot mend the chain. If one thing is necessary to another, they are mutually dependent—one destroyed and both are destroyed. An improper administrator, twenty generations removed, is as fatal to the genuineness of the ordinance as such a one but one generation removed.

Nor will it avail to argue, that cases of necessity may arise when a proper administrator cannot be obtained, and that then an improper one is allowable. Thus some have contended; and not frequently we have seen such a position assumed in defence of Roger Williams. But the argument is grossly sophistical. It is the old apology for clinic baptism—for the substitution of sprinkling in the place of gospel baptism. The sprinklers of antiquity were wont to say, that in cases of necessity, when immersion could not be administered, affusion would suffice; and where water could not be procured, that wine, or oil, or milk, or even sand might be used! Such reasoning is monstrously absurd. For where a duty cannot be performed the obligation ceases. No man is required to perform an impossibility. And a thing not done right is not done at all. The man who cannot be baptized is not required to be baptized. He who, by a plea of necessity, resorts to sprinkling, or uses another element than water, and calls it baptism, mocks God. He performs an act of will worship. He does what is not required at his hands. The same is just as true of the administrator, on the hypothesis now under consideration. If one of

defined character must administer baptism, then another of a different character cannot administer it. The necessity in the case may dispense with the ordinance altogether, but it can never justify its administration in an invalid manner.

The conclusion then seems to be inevitable, that if the administrator is essential to the ordinance now, he was always so and under all circumstances.

A second consequence from the maintenance of the affirmative of this question is, that no person, in these days, can possibly know that he has been baptized at all. Certain it is, that so far as we are concerned, we are involved in most profound ignorance as to the validity of our baptism; and yet we are a Baptist of a Baptist—our father and our father's father were Baptist ministers. We have perfect knowledge of our immersion in the beautiful waters of the Kentucky river. The minister on the occasion has often told us that he was immersed by a certain Baptist minister. And we have been informed, too, upon what we have ever esteemed reliable tradition, that said minister was also, some sixty years ago, immersed by another Baptist minister. But here our information terminates;—who baptized that minister we have no means of ascertaining. All our inquiries have been utterly unavailing. Here, then, at the distance of a little more than half a century, an impenetrable barrier hinders our progress;—clouds and darkness hang upon our horizon, and intercept our vision;—and still we are seventeen centuries this side of the apostles, our chord broken, and we left to wend the dark labyrinth of succession all that long and dreary distance in order to know that we have been baptized!

And we think it altogether probable, that few members of the Muscle Shoal Association would be more successful than ourselves in establishing the line of their baptism, extending from this to the apostolic age. Permit us then to suggest a plan by which the difficulties in this Association may be amicably adjusted:—Let all those who can furnish clear and indubitable evidence of the validity of their baptism, according to the terms of the affirmative of this question, vote non-fellowship for those churches and ministers who believe right to receive a member who has been immersed on profession of faith by a Pedobaptist minister; and let all the rest keep silence. We hazard the prediction, that this will put the matter forever at rest. And what can be more fair? Surely no brother, in all Alabama, would wish to condemn in another what he allows in himself!

It is in vain to urge, in answer to this, that a regular succession of proper administrators may be traced to the apostles. Were we even to grant this (which, by the way, no man can prove,) still insurmountable obstacles would beset our path—still we could not know that we had received baptism from this succession. There have been, it must be remembered, a numerous host of *improper* administrators;—and from these we may have obtained our baptism. Who can tell? Who can dispel the mists of scepticism which must necessarily becloud every mind called to investigate this subject? Who now can possibly establish the validity of his baptism through this succession of administrators? He may fondly dream that he has received

it from a proper administrator, but knowledge on the subject is utterly out of the question.

The last consequence we shall note at present is, that the affirmative of this question makes baptism an anomaly among divine institutions;—it makes it a duty which no one can know that he has performed! Baptism is thus rendered useless and nugatory! If we cannot know that we discharge a duty, there can be no benefit or advantage in efforts at its observance. Its performance or its neglect must, in our minds, amount to the same thing; for if we cannot know that we discharge our duty, what do we gain by efforts to discharge it? In being baptized we may perform a duty; and then we may be mocking God; and according to the doctrine under review, we have no means of determining which is the case. Doubts must ever surround our baptism. It cannot, therefore, furnish the answer of a good conscience toward God. It is impossible that any one can know that he has obeyed the last great commission of the Saviour—that he has been buried with Christ by baptism into death, and arisen to walk in newness of life! But is not this strong presumptive proof, that the position of no baptism without a certain and definite character of administrator, is an absurdity? Can we not know when we discharge any duty? Can we not positively determine when we observe the ordinances of God's house? Or has the lapse of centuries rolled and oblivious wave over the way of holiness, so that no longer can we discern the right paths to walk therein? As at present informed, we are not prepared to receive these things.

J. L. W.

We say of this as of the other, Elder Waller shall himself furnish the materials for the destruction of his own argument. We perfectly agree with him in the conviction that differences of opinion upon this subject should cause no estrangement between brethren of the same faith and order. We hope and trust it will be no cause of non-fellowship between brethren or churches. And we also agree with him most perfectly in the opinion that it is a question of *church duty* which must in each case be decided by *the Church* to which application may be made to receive such a baptism; and that from the decision of that Church there can be no appeal to any earthly tribunal. The question simply is, *what ought the Church to do* in such a case? *How* ought she to decide? By what *rule* is she to determine whether she must *receive* or *reject?* If the *Word of God* has decided who are proper administrators of baptism, the Church must be governed by its directions. If it have not, then the whole controversy is of no consequence at all.

We make no issue with the author until he "comes directly to the matter in hand," and, instead of discussing the question as presented by his correspondent changes it to this—"*Is the administrator necessary to the validity of baptism?*" We do not think the change is calculated to aid in reaching the true answer to the question asked by Richard B. Burleson. But we will answer it by asking the reader to turn to Elder Waller's position in his first article, and see to whom according to the Scriptures, he contends the right to administer baptism belongs. He there contends most strenuously that this right was given to *the churches*, and that the

churches cannot without proving recreant to the trust committed by Heaven to their keeping, transfer it to any others. But they, the churches, can appoint their ministers, or others, to confer it for them. Now who can fail to see, if these things are so, then the "*administrator*" *is* "*necessary.*" And that he must be an administrator *appointed by a true church*—by a church to which Christ committed the ordinance. This is all we contend for. If this be granted, then it must follow that the baptism conferred by one who was *not authorized by such a church*, is of necessity invalid. To suppose the contrary is to suppose that Christ gave the right to confer baptism *exclusively to his churches.* And yet, those who are *not members* of those churches, and who have *no authority* from those churches, of whom those churches have no knowledge, and over whom they have no control, have the *same* right to baptize, which those churches have to which Christ committed the sole and only authority in the case. But this is an absurdity, and a contradiction in terms, and cannot possibly be true. Whatever difficulties lie upon the other side, they must be less than this.

Elder Waller represents us as contending that "*the administrator must be a minister in good standing in a gospel church, or rather, he must be a regular Baptist minister.*

We do not take this ground. We say that the validity of the act, so far as *regards* the administrator, does *not* depend upon his *baptism*, or upon his *ordination*, but upon the *authority to baptize*, which he has received from *the Church.* If these Pedobaptist Churches are *true churches* of Christ, then their immersion is valid baptism. They

have the same right as Baptist Churches, and their ministers the same right as Baptist ministers.

If they are *not* true churches, then, upon Elder Waller's own showing, Christ did not give to *them* the authority to administer baptism, and they could not confer such authority upon their ministers. They, or their ministers could only receive it from those to whom Christ gave it in charge—that is from some true church—but this authority, we contend, has not been conferred on them or their ministers, by any true church, and therefore, if they baptize, they do it *without* authority, and against authority—and thus the act is *illegal and unscriptural*, which is what we mean by saying it is invalid.

We do not base our argument upon the assumption "*that a man cannot give what he has not received*," as the author seems to think. *Our position is that a man cannot perform in the Kingdom of Christ an official act for which he has no authority from the King.* It is not because he is not *baptized*, but because he is not *authorized*, that his work is invalid. An *immersed* minister of a Pedobaptist Church, has no more right to baptize than one who is unimmersed, no more than an excluded Baptist minister would have. But now if we contend, as Elder Waller does, that all authority in the premises, was given in charge to the true churches of Christ—that the churches may authorize their ministers, or other members, to perform it as their servants, and on their behalf, and that the churches cannot go outside their membership, and authorize strangers to do it for them, as we think *we have clearly proved*, how will we dispose of that fearful array of *difficulties*, or those tremen-

dous "*consequences*" which must flow from our position? These, we are told, "*should be dispassionately examined and prayerfully embraced or rejected.* They are three.

The first is, that if a perfectly authorized "administrator is necessary *now* he was always *necessary*." We will presently admit the fact. And will now only vary the expression, by saying that if a properly qualified administrator was *ever* necessary, he is necessary *now*. And therefore, if baptism conferred by Jewish priests, or *any rejectors of the ordinance of Christ*, was not valid baptism in the Apostle's days, it is not now—never has been since their day, and never can be.

And further, if the Lord ever determined who should administer baptism, he did it in full view of all the difficulties and consequences which would grow out of his instructions. The existence of societies claiming to be his churches, yet rejecting his baptism, was perfectly foreseen by the Lord when he gave the authority to administer baptism to his churches. If, therefore, he made no exception in their favor, it would seem to be certain that he intended none ever should be made. He knew that Antichrist would claim to be the ruler in his stead, and would change laws and ordinances. He knew that good men would receive through ignorance or prejudice, the baptism of the Pope, instead of his. He knew all the disorder and confusion which would ensue, and must have seen how very easily all this might be rectified, (as some think,) by simply giving authority " to baptize to those" who would not be baptized, or to those who were baptized in infancy and unbelief. And yet, according to Elder Waller's own showing, he gave this authority only to his own true churches, and

was willing to risk all these consequences, how terrible soever they may now appear. We feel disposed upon this question, to stand upon the same ground that Elder W. stands on, in regard to ordination. We will abide by the practice of the primitive church.

In his review of Wayland, on the ordination of ministers, [Western Bap. Review, Vol. 3, p. 140,] he asks emphatically: "And where shall we go, if we cut loose from the primitive church? If we must not follow the apostles, who are to be our leaders? If the New Testament has committed the duty of setting men apart to the ministerial office to no one—if this is a matter wholly governed by men's varying circumstances—why then the ordinations by the Pope of his swarm of emissaries, is just as right and valid, and divine as those recommended in the essay before us. "To adopt a different course," he thinks, "would strike fatally at the very foundations of all that is essential to Protestantism, and if admitted, will force us to surrender the fortress so long defended against the assaults of the Papists—that the Bible is the only rule of our faith and practice in matters of religion."—P. 136. Like him, we are determined to abide by the practice of the primitive church. And this, he said in his first essay, "was clear." "The path in which the holy men of old walked, is so plain, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." We fully agree with him when he says, in the answer to Wayland, quoted above, "The last commission of our Lord was certainly designed to be executed by some one. It was not a mere blank. It was not composed of mere words of empty sound. *It was addressed to somebody.*" He is speaking of it as a com-

mission to preach, but it is equally a commission to baptize. If, as a commission to preach, it was addressed to somebody, and was designed to designate somebody by divine appointment to the duty of preaching, it must equally have designated some one to the duty of baptizing. The two were united. And what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. "It imposes a duty," he goes on to say, "which clearly implies an obligation resting somewhere. If so, then it creates an office, or recognizes one already in existence. Hence we find in the Scriptures, the names of many who were engaged in the work enjoined by the great commission. Nor was their office esteemed then merely of human expediency, adapted to the changeful circumstances of man. It was regarded as divine."

If these things be so, it follows that God did designate certain persons to baptize. The great commission was addressed to somebody, and it was intended that it should be the special duty of some one to execute it. Was it addressed to the baptized, or to those who would not obey its requisitions? Here is the Scripture teaching. Here is the primitive practice. This is the way in which, according to our author, "*the holy men of old were accustomed to walk.*" And when he turns from this, we say of him, as he of Wayland, "He has thrown away our flag and deserted the tower of our strength. The Bible has ever been the stronghold and the tower of the Baptists—our glory and our ensign. In all things, we have professed to be governed by it. Deprive us of this, and we are as powerless as the strong man shorn of his locks. If we must not walk in the foot-

steps of the holy men of old, then we are in a vast howling wilderness without a light or a pathway."

He is talking of church organization, but every word is just as true of church ordinances, as it is of organization. Let us beware how we are driven from the "*primitive practice*," and the "*old paths*," by fear of difficulties and terrible "consequences," which will, he thinks, inevitably follow a strict construction of the sacred word.

But what are these "three consequences?" Let us approach more closely to them. Let us at least venture to look them fairly in the face. They may not, after all, be so terrible as they look, while they stand like three grim giants, paraded one behind the other, in this essay.

1st. The first is, that if a properly qualified administrator is needful *now*, he *always was*. We see nothing very fearful in this. We freely grant it all. Nor do we urge the plea of necessity. We agree with him in saying that what cannot be done, is not required. And that if a man cannot find a right administrator—one authorized according to the Scriptures—he is not bound to be baptized. He may not baptize himself, or call upon an alien to introduce him into the kingdom. When the deed cannot be done, God will accept the will for the deed.

2nd. But the second consequence, which gives the first all the importance that it can possess, looks at first view more serious. It is, that *now*, no one can know that he has been baptized. And why? Simply because he cannot be assured that there is not somewhere in the long gone past, a false or broken link in the baptismal

chain. I was baptized by a Baptist minister, but I do not know whether he was rightly baptized or not. He may have been baptized by a Mormon, by a Pedobaptist, by a Reformer; or for aught I can *certainly* know, it may be that he forged his papers, and imposed himself upon the church as a baptized man, when in fact, he had not been baptized at all. Now, if anything had occurred in his case, or in the case of any of his predecessors, in the succession, as I trace it back towards the apostles, would it not vitiate his baptism—render it null and void, the same as though he had not been, and as one not baptized, he could not have rightly baptized me. This is the difficulty—what can be done with it? Shall we not quietly retreat from before its frightful visage, and confess that we were wrong in our determination to follow the "primitive practice," and walk in the "old paths," since they lead us into such a labyrinth of uncertainty? Let us at least take one more look at it before we turn. It may be, that what seems a real giant, all arrayed in bloody armor, will prove to be a harmless phantom.

First, therefore, I remark that this difficulty grows out of a mistaken view of our position, which is *not* that the want of baptism invalidates the act, but the want or authority from him who commanded it. This authority, Elder Waller says, was given not to the unbaptized, but to the churches; and that the churches cannot transfer it to their ministers, or any body else. By which he evidently means, that they cannot so divest themselves of it and so invest others with it, that these others will be competent to administer baptism independently of them, and without direct authority delegated

to them by the churches. It follows that unless baptism administered without Christ's authority, and against his authority is legal and valid baptism, no baptism can be legal and valid unless it was thus authorized by a true church of Christ; and if Pedobaptist societies are not true churches, then baptism administered by them or by their authority, is not legal and valid baptism. And this would be equally true, even though they should essay to confer the authority upon a baptized man. What, then, is the real difficulty in the case? It is not to ascertain whether my baptizer was himself baptized, but whether he had authority from a true church to baptize me. The baptism confered by an excluded or deposed Baptist minister, would be no more valid than that conferred by an unbaptized or Pedobaptist minister, because such a one would have no authority to administer baptism. To *know* if I have been baptized, therefore, it is only necessary for me to know that I have been immersed in the manner required by the commission, and by the authority of a true church of Jesus Christ. I do not need to ask a single question about the administrator, but only this: Was he authorized by the church? And of this I had the evidence of my senses. Since the church which received my profession of faith, and upon whose determination I was baptized, would not permit the rite to be performed for her, by one whom she did not approve. I have therefore no baptismal pedigree to trace – no apostolic succession of the ministry to establish. The whole thing is before my eyes. Is this a true church of Christ? Does it authorize this man to baptize me? If it be not a true church, I do not desire connection with it. If it be, it has au-

thority from the King to administer his ordinance. But some one may say: "This is not getting rid of the difficulty. It simply transfers it from the minister to the church. You do not indeed have to trace the baptismal pedigree of the administrator, but you do have to trace that of the church, for which he officiates. For if this church have been constituted of unbaptized members, or if it be the off-shoot of one that was so constituted, it cannot be a true Church, since a true church must consist of baptized believers. And an unbaptized church could never give origin to a baptized one. Nor, is it any easier for churches to trace their pedigree, than for individuals." So here we have the giant in another shape, and with another name—but none the less a giant.

Well, let us not be disheartened. Let us call in our common sense, and look at this case as we are used to regard other matters of common life. If a man and woman are living together as husband and wife, and we see nothing in their family affairs that contradicts the supposition, we are justified in taking it for granted that they are married according to law. We do not feel called upon to go back and search the records of the court, to see if license were granted in due form. We do not demand the certificate of the minister or officer, who united them, and then go back and enquire if he were in fact a minister or a duly qualified officer. If this were needful, not one child in fifty could ascertain with certainty, whether his parents were born in lawful wedlock or not.

Or, to make the case more completely parallel, let us suppose that the laws of the country require that he who

performs the marriage ceremony must be himself a married man. Would it follow of necessity that no one could possibly know that he was married? Would we then, when we found men officiating under the law, and having a commission from the legal authority, feel bound to visit their dwellings and see with our own eyes that there was a woman there, and then go to the records and ascertain that this very man had been married to that very woman, and then go back and learn who married them, and make a similar investigation in regard to him—and then in regard to his predecessors, back to the day when the law was enacted? Not at all. We should as now, be justified in taking it for granted that they had a legal commission from the proper authorities, were every way worthy and well qualified—until the contrary was alleged and proved. And even then our marriage would be legal, if the officer was acting by authority of the law, and held his commission under the law.

We found our parents living as man and wife. They were in possession of all the privileges and immunities of married persons. There was nothing in their opinions, nothing in their behavior, which could create a doubt that they were not what they seemed to be. We therefore take it for granted, that they were, until some one shall bring positive proof to the contrary.

So when we find a church holding the doctrines of Christ, and "walking in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, blameless," constituted to all appearance upon the heavenly model, we are justified in taking it for granted that it is a true church, until some one can, and does, show evidence to the contrary. We

are under no necessity of going back to ask by whom it was constituted, much less to trace its pedigree in all past ages. If it looks like a true church, believes like a true church, and acts like a true church, we will take it for granted that it is a true church, as it believes itself to be, until some one shall present some ground of doubt. And such ground must not be vague and uncertain conjecture, founded on bare passibilities, or even upon probabilities—it must be something true and reliable. I might say to any man: "Sir, you have no reliable evidence that you are the descendant of the family whose name you bear. For, even now, some people live as man and wife who are not truly married, and in past generations such things were much more common than they are now. The chances are that some time or other, nobody now knows when, at some place or other, nobody now knows where, in the case of some one of your ancestors, nobody now knows which, the marriage covenant was violated, and you may be the offspring of shame and sin. Such irregularities have been innumerable, and it would be strange indeed if some of them had not by some means crept into your family."

He would probably knock me down for my insolence, and yet I would have quite as good ground for my dishonorable imputations as those have who say that there is now no Baptist church that can be sure that it is a true church by regular descent from Christ and the apostles. I say again, when we find a body of professed believers which has the ordinances and the doctrines of Christ, we are justified in the absence of proof to the contrary in taking it for granted that it came honestly by them. If it looks like a true church, believes like

a true church, and acts like a true church, to me, it is, and must be a true church, until the contrary has been established. The burden of proof falls upon the adversaries. We do not need to establish our pedigree. It is for them to invalidate it; and that, not by suppositions, but by facts, not by suggesting what was possible, or even probable, but by showing what most certainly was true. Whenever this is done, in regard to any particular church, it will become its duty at once to correct the wrong by seeking a new organization at the hands of those against whom no deficiency has been established. But until this is done, such a church is to be regarded as a part of the great visible kingdom of Christ, and authorized by him to administer his ordinances.

And he who says it is no church and has no such authority is to be regarded as a traducer and slanderer until he has made his assertion good. When we say of Pedobaptist societies that their pedigree is false we promptly specify their origin. We show at once, and by indisputable records, that they are the adulterous progeny of her, who in the Word, is called the Mother of Harlots. We do not base our accusation upon possibilities or probabilities. We show the time, the place, the agencies, all in minute detail. We trace their history, too, not in the records of their enemies, but in those made by themselves. From such sources as these, Elder Waller, in his essay on the "Reformation," draws an argument of tremendous force to prove that they are not true churches and have no true ministry, and shows that the Baptist churches have from the first been the

true successors of those established by Christ and the apostles.

In that article he proves that

"Upon the supposition that the Romish was the church of Christ, then it persecuted itself—wore out itself—overcame itself, and was delivered into the hands of itself twelve hundred and sixty years!! And besides, the Christian or Romish church, by the above exposition, did not begin for several centuries after the Christion era! It was not established by Jesus and his apostles; but sprouted on the head of the Roman beast, and grew into greatness and strength by fraud, stratagem, persecution, and horrid blasphemy! And the church of Christ is to continue forever. The gates of hell will not prevail against it. But the Romish church, according to the prophet, as explained above, is to be destroyed before the millenium can come. 'The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end.' Destruction, utter and forever, and not reformation, is the portion of the Romish church. It is not represented as the church of Christ in a state of apostacy, but as an anti-christian establishment, founded in human pride and wickedness—arising long after the foundations of the true christian church were laid—among another people and under far different circumstances—and whose mission was of Satan, to worry and to wear out the saints of the Most High."

And having shown that the reformed churches, that is to say, those commonly called Protestant churches, came,

by their own confession out of Rome, and have no other ministry, and no other baptism, than those they brought with them from a body that was "neither the church nor a branch of the church;" but which, "by both prophets and apostles, was regarded as anti-christian in its origin and progress, waging unremitting and unrelenting warfare upon the institutions of the gospel and upon the saints of the Most High." He asks:

"Did God then leave himself without a witness? Did the gates of hell prevail against his church? Were the foundations of his kingdom laid in sand, that it yielded to the storms of persecution which befell it during the reign of the Man of Sin? Or did the church exist and stand, as firm as the rock of its foundation? And if so, where was it in that long and dreary night, from the revelation of the Son of Perdition until the Reformation of the sixteenth century? These inquiries demand serious consideration and satisfactory answers.

"It will not do, by way of response, to urge the existence of an 'invisible church.' This is to evade and not to meet the difficulty. The Savior did not build an 'invisible church' upon the 'rock' confessed by Peter. The church of Christ on earth is *visible*. The light of the gospel was not given to be put under a bushel. The church of the Redeemer is as a city set upon a hill, whose light cannot be hid. It stands upon Mount Zion with the ceaseless and exhaustless effulgence of the gospel day pouring perpetually upon its glittering and glorious turrets. And he is wonderfully endowed, to whose vision that is visible which is invisible! Besides, it is certain from the positive testmony of the Scrip-

tures, that the adherents of Popery from the beginning saw, and hence pursued and persecuted the saints of the Most High—the *people* or church of the Redeemer—those who followed the Lamb whithersoever he went—who would not worship the beast, neither his image—and who refused to receive his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith (Chap. xxv., *passim*) tells us truly, that 'The visible church is Catholic under the gospel, not confined to any one nation.' 'Unto this Catholic visible church,' continues the same instrument,' 'Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world. . . There shall always be a church on earth to worship God according to his will.' These positions are abundantly sustained by the Bible. And yet it has been too common, even with the most acute and accurate observers, when casting their eyes back through the gloom of the dark ages, to conclude, at the first glance that the altars of God were then all cast down, and that none were left as witnesses of the truth and worshippers of the Most High. But upon a more prolonged and careful examination, they have been enabled to discern, in the fastnesses of the mountains and in the recesses of the wilderness, the altar fires of our holy religion burning undimmed in the hearts of multitudes who remained unterrified by opposition and unpolluted by surrounding corruption. These were the people of God—his church in the wilderness—vanquished but not subdued, cast down but not destroyed. Like the bush in the vision of the patriarch, they were enveloped in flames but not consumed. They had never worshipped

nor wondered after the beast, and hence they were cast in the furnace of persecution, heated seven times hotter than its wont; but like the three Hebrew children, they had been wonderfully preserved, and the smell of fire was not found upon their garments.

"The church of Christ, if always visible and if always obedient to the will and word of God, as taught in the Scriptures and asserted in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, was not identified with the Papal or anti-christian church, but was distinct from it, and persecuted by it. That there have been true friends of Jesus within the precincts of the Papacy—men who, in spite of the darkness by which they were surrounded, loved and longed for the light, and rejoiced in the truth—is amply attested by the records of the past. The most purblind can see on the sky of Papal dominion, here and there a star twinkling through the gloom, revealing more palpably the dark and dreary night upon which they shed unavailing splendor. These lights were the exceptions; the darkness was the rule. They were not parts of the Papal system; they existed and sparkled in spite of it. But the friends of truth, whether few or many, within the gates of Mystical Babylon, and of necessity polluted to some extent by contact with her abominations, were not regarded by 'holy men of old, as those who, when the Man of Sin reigned and rioted over the deluded and downtrodden nations, refused him allegiance and endured the consequences of his fierce indignation. While, therefore, there were doubtless many, identified with the Romish church, whom God regarded as his people, and whom he warned by his prophets to come out of her, lest they should be made partakers of

her plagues in the hour of her doom and desolation; yet it is clear that they were not represented as *the* church of the Redeemer, which never was a part and portion of the Papism—which never sustained any relationship to the Mother of Harlots. To deny this, is to discard the visibility of the church, and render the promise of God of none effect. But the history of the true church is obscure and exceedingly difficult to trace. The Scriptures so intimate. She was to be concealed in the wilderness; and the world was to be filled with the admiration of her cruel and unrelenting foe. The world would wonder after the beast, and reel, intoxicated with the wine of the fornication of Mystical Babylon. Thus teaching us, in symbolical language, that the true church of Christ should attract little of the world's attention; and that even the historian would find more to admire and record in he career of her persecutors, than in her own quiet, unpretending, and despised existence. This was the prophecy—how exact and wonderful its fulfillment!

"The Scriptures have foretold the preservation of the true church during the world's midnight, when Popery was the world's despot, it is our own business to prove from history the fulfillment of the prediction. Were there professed Christians during that period, then, possessing the characteristics of the church of Christ, and existing distinct from the Papism ,and persecuted by it? And if so, *who were they?* In answering this question, we shall assume for the present the existence of such Christians; and shall proceed, in the first place, to show who *they were not.*"

And after showing that "they were not Lutherans," "not Presbyterians," nor yet Episcopalians of the Church of England, and that, in short, "no Protestant or reformed denomination can be regarded as the witnesses of the truth during the dark ages;" that "the reformed churches were not those with whose blood the Whore of Babylon was drunk;" that, "like their mother, they have broken down the barriers between the church and the world;" and that "they too must fall, before the world can be converted or mankind can be free." He thus continues the argument:

"The Baptists are not reformed Papists. They claim no kindredship with mystical Babylon. They are not Reformers or Protestants in the historical import of those terms. None of their distinguishing tenets are of Romish origin; and, of course, cannot be *reformed*, as that word is ecclesiastically used. They never wore the yoke of the Roman pontiff, and hence never felt it necessary to protest against its continuance upon their necks. None of their denominational peculiarities are derived from the Papal church; or tend in the least to prove that they are the children of 'the mother of harlots.' Their practices and principles, for which they have been so much persecuted, and on account of which they are now everywhere denounced, are clearly antipapel, and claim an existence anterior to the time when the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, was revealed. The Baptists never received 'the mark of the beast' upon their foreheads. They never acknowledged the usurped authority of the Pope; but bore testimony against him

with their blood, when he ruled in all the plenitude of his wickedness.

"This is no idle fiction—no arrogant claim set up to minister to denominational vanity. It is conceded to us by the most eminent and distinguished of our opponents. That the churches of the first and second centuries were Baptist churches, is confessed by the learned and the candid of the Pedobaptists."

Having established this by quotations from the most reliable authorities—such as Mosheim, Barrow, Benton, Riddle, and Neander—he says:

"This is enough. It is the testimony of eminently learned men and opponents, that the churches of the first ages of Christianity, were Baptist churches. We might trace the existence of these churches, step by step, through every successive age from that time to the present. But it is not necessary. It would require more time and space than we can now bestow. Besides, the existence of the Baptists since the apostolic age, has been also conceded by our enemies. The Baptists are not of yesterday. Their's is no ephemeral existence. They did not come into being in the sixteenth century; nor are they the result of the Reformation.

"Mosheim tells us, that long before the days of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, persons maintaining Baptist sentiments. And elsewhere he says:

" 'The true origin of that sect which acquired the denomination of Anabaptists by their administering anew the rites of baptism, and derived that of Menno-

nites from the famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is hid in *the depth* of antiquity, and is, of consequence, extremely difficult to be ascertained.'

"But we have more specific testimony than even this.

"Zuingulius, a cotemporary of Luther, and a bitter opponent of the Baptists, says:

" 'The institution of Anabaptism is no novelty, but for *thirteen hundred years* has caused great disturbances in the church, and has acquired such a strength that the attempt in this age to contend with it appeared futile for a while.'

"Cardinal Hossius, president of the Council of Trent, says:

" 'If the truth of religion were to be judged of by the readiness and cheerfulness which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer and surer than that of the Anabaptists, [Baptists;] since there have been none, for these *twelve hundred years past*, that have been more grievously punished, or that have more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone, and even offered themselves to the most cruel sorts of punishment, than those people. The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect, of which kind the Waldensian brethren seem to have been. Nor is this heresy of modern origin, for it existed in the time of Austin.'

"These concessions were written in the first part of the sixteenth century—about the year 1525. Up to that time, the dawn of the Reformation, for *thirteen hundred years*, the Baptists had caused 'great disturbances in

the church;' for *twelve hundred years* there had been none more grievously punished. These numbers are significant. Daniel (chap. vii. 25) had foretold that the people of God should be given into the hands of their enemies, and be persecuted *'until a time and times, and the dividing of times;'* which expositors have shown to mean, twelve hundred and sixty years. And John (Rev. xi. 4) says the two witnesses would prophecy 'a thousand two hundred and three score [1260] days, [or years,] clothed in sackcloth.' Again, (xii. 6,) he says: 'The woman [the church] fled into the wilderness a thousand two hundred and three score [1260] days,' or years. Again, (xiii. 5,) he says, power was given unto the beast [the persecuting anti-christian establishments] to continue 'forty and two months'—1260 prophetical days, or years. If these prophecies have been correctly interpreted by reformed commentators, how exactly have they been fulfilled in the history of the Baptists, according to the testimony of Zuingulius and Hossius! And yet these men wrote in no friendship to the Baptists, and with no intention of showing that the gates of hell had never prevailed against the church.

"The reader will remark, too, that the time of the persecution of the Baptists as fixed by these writers, takes our history back to that period, near the apostolic age, when, as we have shown, it is conceded by all candid, competent judges, that the sentiments of the Baptists almost universally obtained. [See Orchard's Church History.]

"With one other quotation and we will bring this article to a close.

"Dr. Ypeig, Professor of Theology in the University of Groningen, and the Rev. J. J. Dermout, chaplain to the King of Netherlands, the highest authority in the Dutch Reformed church, in their '*Account of the origin of the Dutch Baptists*,' says:

"'We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldeneses; and who have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin. And on this account, the Baptists may be considered *as the only Christian community that have stood since the days of the apostles*, and as a Christian society have preserved *pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages*. The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish church, that the Reformation brought about in the sixteenth century was in the highest degree necessary, and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notions of the Catholics, that their communion is the most ancient.'

"Here we rest our cause. The case is made out. The doctrine of reforming the Papal church is unwarranted by Scripture and unsupported by history. The church of Christ was persecuted, but never overthrown; cast down, but not destroyed. It was built upon a rock, against which neither the powers of darkness nor the seductions of Satan transformed into an angel of light, could prevail. Poor, persecuted, obscure, and despised; still the true friends of the Redeemer maintained the great truths of our holy religion, unterrified by opposition and unseduced by corruption. And the honor of being the witnesses for the truth and the word of God,

when the civilized nations of the earth had bowed in blind and servile obedience to the authority of the Roman pontiff—in sustaining in undiminished radiance and splendor the altar-fires of our holy religion during the long and dreary darkness of the world's midnight—belongs to the *Baptists*. This is confessed by their enemies; and thus, in them, is fulfilled the predictions of prophets, and illustrated that promise of the Saviour, that the gates of hell should not prevail against his church."

Whatever, therefore, other men may say, Elder Waller, if he were still alive, could never say that there has not been a literal fulfillment of the Saviour's promise to sustain his church. Amidst all the thick darkness there has ever been light in the dwelling of Israel. True, the stream of our church succession seems sometimes to be almost dammed up by the dead bodies of those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus, and sometimes almost dried up by the flames that consumed them; but yet it can be traced, according to his own showing, all the way from the apostles down. But, as I explained before, this should not be required of us. The burden of proof does not devolve on us. If we are now right, let those who allege that we have once been wrong, show when and where. Let them prove it, not from the published slanders of our enemies and persecutors, but from our own historians, as we prove what they have been. Till this is done, though there might be a dark historical abyss of many hundred years where I cannot discover a single Baptist church, I would maintain such churches must have been, for He who rules the universe declared

that they should be: He would build it, and, against it all the powers of hell should not prevail. If I could not prove it, I would still believe it on his word. But I am not bound to show to him who presents the objection which we have been considering, even the Saviour's promise, much less the evidence of its fulfillment. I simply show a church which, to all appearance, and, for aught that he or any one can show, is a true church of baptized believers, invested by the Word of God, with the authority to baptize other believers, and thus introduce them into his visible kingdom. Such a church has authorized a member, or a minister, to baptize me. That person so authorized by Christ, through this church as his executive, has baptized me, and, therefore, I know that I am baptized, as truly as I know, or now have any means of knowing, that my parents or my grand-parents were legally married. If any man shall charge that this is not a true church, it does not in the slightest degree affect my confidence until he shall have proved it—and it is no proof to say that it possibly, or even probably may be that it is not a real and genuine church, any more than it would be proof that my Uncle Joe had stolen a horse and was sent to the Penitentiary, for some one to say that horses had often been stolen, that many horses had been stolen in the country where he lived, and that some men had been convicted and sent to the Penitentiary for this offence, and that there was upon the mind of the accuser an indistinct impression that there was one of them whose name was Joe or John, or, at any rate, that it began either with J or G. When will men learn to reason upon subjects connected

with religion with the same common sense that they do about other things.

We have now examined this terrible consequence, No. two, and find it to be no bloody giant after all, either in its first or second form, but only a fearful phantom, which, like other phantoms, disappears before the light of calm investigation.

The third and "last consequence," our author says, is that "it makes baptism an anomaly among divine institutions—it makes it a duty which no one knows that he has performed. Baptism is thus rendered useless and nugatory." But this is only a different way of saying what he said before—viz., that no one could know whether he had been baptized. In removing that objection we have answered this, by showing that we can know, and do know, whether we have been baptized, just as certainly as we can know that there is any true church of Christ upon the earth.

Thus has Elder Waller himself, as we promsied he should, furnished the artillery with which to batter down his own fortifications.

CHAPTER VII.

ELDER A. P. WILLIAMS.

WHILE the foregoing matter was in press some one sent me a number of the Western Watchman containing the following article. It deserves our particular attention. It is evidently the production of a candid and logical mind. The argument ranks among the very best that we have seen upon that side of the question, and it has this special recommendation: that it makes the Scriptures the sole standard of our duty in regard to this matter.

The position of this writer seems to be, that as the candidate is responsible for *himself*, and the administrator for *himself;* the church has no right to inquire into the qualifications of the administrator, although it must enquire into those of the candidate. If the candidate must not answer for the wrong-doing of the administrator, then he thinks the Church cannot reject the administration.

But lest we seem to prejudge the argument, we lay it before the reader:

VALIDITY OF BAPTISM.

WARRENSBURG, January 6, 1858.

My views on the question, whether Baptist churches should receive the immersions administered by Pedobaptists and Campbellites, have been again and again called for. I have deferred until now writing on the subject, because my own mind was not fully satisfied, and because it is a question on which I feel a great delicacy in expressing an opinion. It is a question on which Baptists have ever been divided, and upon which I presume they ever will be divided, until we get more light than we now have. Some will be satisfied with the reasoning on one side, and some on the other.

In reasoning on the subject, great candor and ingenuousness of spirit should be exercised. The points at issue ought to be well and clearly defined and understood. I hope that my brethren who may differ from me, and may see cause to controvert what I shall say, will treat me with that same spirit of Christian candor and courtesy that I hope to maintain.

These things being premised, I shall proceed:

I. To notice the points of agreement; and then,

II. The points at issue.

1. In respect to Pedobaptist and other organizations, we entertain the same views. We do not regard them as Scripturally organized churches of Jesus Christ, though embracing in their communion many sincere Christians.

2. We agree that their ministers do not receive their ordination from Scripturally organized churches. This is self-evident. If the foregoing is true, this must be true. Hence,

3. We view their administrations as irregular, so far as they are concerned. And now, the only remaining question is how are we to treat their administrations? This brings us to the points at isssue.

Some of our brethren tell us we cannot receive any one who has been immersed by Pedobaptists, etc., into our membership, upon his immersion, without declaring by that act that Pedobaptist churches are regularly organized churches of Christ, and that their ordinations and administrations are Scriptural and valid. We, or I, on the other hand, think we may. My reasons are as follows:

1. In that transaction we call baptism there are three parties. Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the one hand, and the administrator and the recipient on the other. So far as the administrator is concerned, it is an act performed by him in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ, and for the performance of which he is amenable to Jesus Christ. And, so far as the candidate is concerned, he receives the rite in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ, and is amenable to him for a right performance of it. And now, as each is responsible to the Saviour for himself, the one is not responsible for the other. If this is true, then the Saviour may accept of the act as performed by the candidate, while he disapproves of the administrator. And what he may do, his church may do.

Now, the question with me is, Does the Word of God directly, or by implication, make the candidate responsible for any *unknown* disqualification in the administrator? I think it does not, any more than it makes the administrator responsible for any unknown disqualification in the candidate. In this, as in everything else, "every one must give an account *of himself* to God." Rom. 14:12.

Now let us get all the light we can from the Scriptures.

1. What do they say about the administrator?

The first administrator they introduce to our notice is John the Baptist. His commission was directly from heaven. Matt. 21:25; John 1:33. It authorized the baptism of those who brought forth fruits suitable for repentance, Matt. 3:8, and pledged themselves to believe on the coming Messiah, Acts 19:4. But many of them did not believe on him, and thus proved recreant to their plighted obligations. Was John amenable for this? I presume not. He could only look at the outward appearance. It was for them, not for him, to account for the *reality* of their profession.

The next passage worthy of notice is Matt. 28:19: ministrators of the rite is in John 4:2. This passage simply tells us Jesus' disciples baptized. It is to be presumed that they baptized some who afterwards proved themselves to be insincere. See John 6:66. But were they responsible for having thus administered the rite to unqualified persons? Not if they were unapprised of the disqualification.

The next passake worthy of notice is Matt. 28:19: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them," etc. We all

regard this as the *law of baptism, especially so far as* "all nations" are concerned. Baptism, like the Gospel, had before been confined to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." But now it, like the Gospel, was extended to all nations. This law, therefore, makes no change either in administrator or subject. Before, the Saviour's *disciples* baptized the *discipled*. They must still do so. And hence, though these words were spoken to the *Apostles*, the authority to teach or to baptize was not confined to them. The example of Philip (Acts 8:35, 38) fully shows this. And it is this fact, I presume, that has caused the seeming neglect to tell us, in so many instances of baptism, who the administrators were. Acts 2:41, tells us, "As many as gladly received Peter's word were baptized," but it does not tell us by *whom* they were baptized. So Acts 10:48, tells us Peter commanded Cornelius and his friends who received the Holy Ghost with him, to be baptized, but it does not specify by whom. And in Acts 19:3, Paul inquires of the twelve disciples he found at Ephesus, "*unto what* were ye baptized," but not *by whom* were ye baptized. All this goes to show to me that more stress is to be laid upon the *fact* of the baptism than the *administrator* of it.

The following passage contains direct injunctions with respect to the recipients of the rite. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized, every one of you," etc. Now, can you infer from this passage that these persons were to be concerned about anything but their *own* qualifications in the case? Must they go about investigating the question of adminis-

tratorship? Or were they concerned simply with the thing commanded—be baptized?

Acts 10:48: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Now what was the thing commanded here? To investigate the question of administratorship? No; *be baptized.* Now I think that as *two* commands are given, the one having respect to the administrator, and the other having respect to the subject, it is the business of the administrator to see to it, that he is doing his duty, and it the business of the candidate to see to it, that he is doing his, while each is not responsible for the other. If the administrator assumes an office that does not belong to him, as does every unconverted, uncalled preacher to God, he is responsible. Or if a Pedobaptist minister baptized without being himself baptized, or without really believing the Bible, enjoins immersion, to God he is responsible. If a candidate presents himself for baptism, while still in his sins—knowing his heart not to be right in the sight of God—to God he is responsible. But if the administrator is really converted—called of God to the ministry and regularly set apart by the Church, and baptizes the professedly taught disciples, he does his duty, and God accepts of his service. Philip obeyed the Lord Jesus Christ as much in baptizing Simon as he did in baptizing the other believing Samaritans, because he regarded Simon at the time as being a believer as much as he did them. Still, Simon was very *culpable* in receiving the rite, because he knew himself to be insincere. So, if the candidate is converted—has just views of the symbolical import and obligations of the rite—and through a sincere desire to obey the Lord

Jesus Christ, receives it—though disqualification may attach to the administrator—the Saviour accepts of the act. The man is really baptized, though the administrator is culpable.

This, it does seem to me, is a proper and Scriptural view of the subject. Hence I am in favor of the reception of immersed persons coming to us from other denominations, provided they give evidence of having been converted—true believers at the time of their baptism, and of their soundness in the faith.

It seems to me that this view of the subject cannot be gainsaid unless the position can be maintained that the candidate must answer for the administrator. And let that position be one established, and the most fearful consequences must follow. It is impossible for one to *know* that the man who is about to baptize, or who has baptized him, was really called of God to the work. It is impossible for him to know that there is not a link wanting in the chain somewhere. And hence, after all, none of us may be validly baptized!

Besides, it seems to me that the *validity* of the rite, so far as the candidate is concerned, depends upon his qualification for it, and the view he had of it nature and obligations at the time of receiving it.

Suppose one who has been immersed come before the Church for membership and gives satisfaction on the following points:

1. That previous to his baptism he was led as a penitent to trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, and realized in his own consciousness the joys of his salvation.

2. That he had been immersed because he felt it to be his duty to declare in that act his death to sin,

his union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.

3. That he felt bound by that act henceforth to walk in newness of life; that his baptism was thus to him the "answer of a good conscience toward God."

4. That after investigating our views of Church organization, doctrine, discipline, etc., and comparing them with the Word of God, he felt that we are established on the true foundation of Christ and his Apostles.

But suppose he felt that he could not repeat the act of immersion, being conscious of having already obeyed the Lord Jesus Christ in it, shall we fall back upon the administrator and say: "Brother, you seem to have been qualified for the rite—you seem to have entertained Scriptural views of its import, and you seem to be fully sensible of the obligations it imposes upon its recipient, but you were baptized by an unqualified administrator, and we cannot receive you." He answers: "Brethren, as to the question of qualified administratorship, I do not know that I thought of it. My great concern was with myself. If the man who baptized me was not what he professed to be, I cannot help it. I cannot account for him. I had to do not with his qualifications, but my own; and I feel that Jesus Christ has received me; and now, if I should be baptized again, I could assume no obligation I do not now feel that I have already assumed, I could declare no fact that I do not feel that I have already declared. It would be a mere repetition of an act, without any moral effect; and you would not have me, would you, to perform the mere duplicate of an action having no additional meaning or force, not because you find any fault with me, but with another

man? If you would, I cannot submit." What should we do in this case? Doom the man to seek membership in what we declare to be an unscriptural organization or live in the world? This is holding him to a fearful account. No; I would say, receive him; and in doing so, have it understood that the act of reception goes not beyond the individual. It neither pronounces for or against the administrator. He may or he may not have been qualified. The act only speaks for the person received. "It hath this extent, no more."

A. P. WILLIAMS.

P. S.—Bro. R.'s questions are, in this article, virtually answered. By and by, they may receive more direct attention. This article is too long to allow of additional remarks. A. P. W.

We like the spirit of this argument. The writer, we think, is one who seeks for truth, and knows the place to look for it. To the law and to the testimony. Here is the ground on which we love to meet a fair and honest opponent. The question must ever be, "What saith the Scripture? How readest thou?" And what we have now to ask is, whether this writer has shown any Scriptural authority for a Church of Christ to recognize as true and valid baptism, an immersion conferred by one not a Church member—not baptized, and without any authority from any Church? He admits that these "Pedobaptists and other organizations" are not true Churches, and that their ministers have no authority from any true Churches, and this being the case, he

asks, "how are we to treat their administrations?" We would have answered; if they are not true Churches of Jesus Christ, and have no authority from Him to administer his ordinance we must treat these administrations just as we would those of societies that did not *claim* to be Churches—just as we would treat administrations conferred by authority of an Odd Fellows' Lodge, or a Masonic Chapter, just as we would treat those of a man who laid no *claim* to being a Scriptural administrator. But Bro. Williams thinks not so, and gives his reasons. Let us consider them fairly and give them all the weight to which they are entitled.

"The question" with him is, does the Word of God directly or by implication make the candidate responsible for any *unknown disqualification in* the *administrator?*

This is *not* precisely the question *with us.* It is to us a question of *Church duty.* It is whether the Word of God, directly or by implication, authorizes a *Church* of Christ to receive that as true baptism which was conferred without the authority, express or implied, of any true Church. But we meet our author upon his own ground.

We answer, 1st. If want of Church membership is a disqualification, and the administrator is notoriously not a Church member, this is *not* an *unknown* disqualification; But the administrators of whom he is speaking, he admits, are not members of Scripturally organized Churches of Christ. 2d. If want of Church authority conferred in ordination is a disqualification, then this is not an *unknown* disqualification, for these administrators lay no claim to any authority conferred

by what this writer recognizes as a true Church of Christ.

We will meet him upon his own ground, and he shall himself furnish the weapons for the demolition of his own defences. The candidate, he says, is no more responsible for *unknown* disqualifications in the administrator than the administrator is for unknown qualifications in the candidate. This is the basis of his very ingenious and plausible argument. Now, let us look into this matter. How is the administrator to know whether his candidate is qualified? Is he at liberty to immerse without any examination or enquiry, every one who applies? By no means, he goes to the Word of God for instructions. He must have satisfactory testimony that his applicant is a believer in Christ, and desires and intends to conform in all things to the laws of His kingdom. Why must he require this? Simply, because the Word of the Master requires that they, and they alone, shall be baptized who have believed, and who do thus submit themselves to be governed by His laws, professing themselves to be dead to sin and alive to new obedience.

The administrator is not indeed responsible for any unknown and concealed deficiencies in the candidate.—He may be a hypocrite or self-deceived, but he must give the Church or the administrator satisfactory *evidence*, that he is a sincere and pious *believer*. If baptized without this, he is not Scripturally baptized, and the Church cannot receive his baptism as valid. Now if the same law which designates the qualifications of the candidate designates those of the administrator, then the candidate is just as much bound to know that the

administrator is qualified, as the other is to know that the candidate is qualified. They are both equally subject to the same law. The qualification required of the candidate is a credible profession of his faith in Christ. But here comes up the difficulty. *Has that law designated any class of persons as administrators?* Does that law require *any* specific qualifications whatever of those who are to confer this ordinance? It either does or it does not. If not, then any man and every man is just as much an authorized administrator of Christ's ordinance as a Pedobaptist or Campbellite minister. The candidate may choose any one in the Church or in the world, professor or non-professor, baptized or unbaptized, infidel or Christian. He believes—he desires to be baptized. He is not to baptize himself. Somebody must put him in the water, but it is of no consequence who it shall be. No set of people claiming to be Christians, and regarding baptism in any form as an ordinance of Christ, have ever taken a position like this. Baptists and Pedobaptists of all classes and names admit, and contend that *some* qualifications are required of the administrator, and all except certain persons among the Baptists, we believe, contend that baptism and Church membership, if not ordination, are essential qualifications. Whether they are or not, must be decided by the Scriptures. And the writer of this article very properly goes to the Word to learn "what the Scriptures say of the administrator."

He introduces us first to John the Baptist. "His commission was directly from Heaven." Those who received *his* baptism, professed their faith in this fact. They received it of him, because they believed him to be

authorized by God to confer it. And just so, every one who receives baptism *as an ordinance of Christ* at the hands of any man, does by that act recognize that administrator as one *authorized by Christ to administer his ordinance*.

But what if John baptized some who, unknown to him, were unqualified, was he responsible? Our author presumes not, and so do we. What of it? "John could only look at the outward appearance." Very true. But what of it? Does it follow that because John was not responsible for the *unknown* disqualification of his candidates, that the candidates for Christian baptism are to make no enquiry at all in regard to the qualifications of those to whom they apply to confer on them Christ's ordinances? And if Christ has limited the authority to confer it to those persons possessing certain qualifications, are candidates at liberty to receive it of those who are *openly* and *notoriously* destitute of those qualifications? If to have been baptized themselves, be a qualification for Christ's administrators—and immersion only is true baptism—then the administrators of whom our author is speaking are *known* to be disuqalified. They do not pretend to have been immersed. If Church membership be a necessary qualification, and these organizations be not true Churches, then the disqualification *is not unknown*. It is as *open* and *notorious*, as is the fact that they are members of those societies.

"The next passage" referred to is John iv. 2, which simply tells us that the disciples of Jesus baptized. "And what," our author asks, "if they baptized some

who were insincere, were they responsible?" "Not if they were unapprised of the disqualification."

We cannot go *quite* so far as this,, for we believe they *would have been responsible* for baptizing any one of whose disqualifications they might as readily have known, as any one can know the disqualifications of these administrators, provided want of Church membership and Church authority are such disqualifications, and the societies for which they officiate are no true Churches, all of which this article concedes.

The next passage mentioned is the great commission, which our author truly says, "we all regard as the *law* of baptism." "This law," he says, " made no change either in administrator or subject." "The disciples" were still "to baptize the discipled." It was not confined to the Apostles, for Philip the Evangelist baptized, and there were many baptized, we know not by *whom*, Sundry persons were commanded to be baptized, but nothing was told them as to who should administer the rite. No one was charged "to investigate this question of administratorship." All very true, but what of it? Does it follow that it was of no consequence who administered the rite? If they were not enjoined to seek for baptism of a Christian Church or an authorized minister of such a Church, are we to infer that they might receive it of a Jewish synagogue or a heathen priest? Does it follow that no one was designated to the office of baptizing? Does it not rather appear that this point had been settled by the commission itself, and was so well understood that no further injunction was needed? They would surely not apply to those who were not among the baptized for the ordinance of Christ's bap-

tism. They would not expect those to *confer it*, who *would not themselves receive it*. What if there are here *two* commands, one to the candidate, and the other to the administrator; one to be baptized, and the other to baptize him? Does it follow, as our author seems to think, that it is a matter of indifference *to the Church*, whether the rite is conferred by the person commanded to give it, or by some one else? True, the man who, uncalled, unqualified and unauthorized, takes on himself this responsibility to confer Christ's ordinance without His authority is responsible to Christ. And he who is baptized without the faith that should prepare him for the act, is also responsible to Christ, but we do not see how this releases the *Church* from the responsibility to see that the ordinance is *both rightly conferred* and *rightly received*. The duty of the Church is something seperate and distinct from that of the administrator or the subject of this ordinance, and as much connected with the one as the other. As she cannot recognize a baptism which was not properly *received*, no more can she recognize one which was not properly *conferred*. So far as she has any authority in the case, she must see to it, that the will of the Master is equally obeyed, both in regard to him who administers and him who is the recipient of the ordinance; if by receiving him as baptized she recognizes him as a Scriptural *believer*, that is, as one qualified to receive baptism, she equally recognizes the other as a Scriptural administrator, that is, as one authorized to confer baptism. The candidate may be very honest, and the administrator very conscientious, they must each answer to Christ. He may accept not only one, but both, and yet his Church may

be bound to reject the baptism. Christ as a sovereign, does what He will. His *Church*, as His executive, can only obey the written law which He has left for her instructions. She is not to ask, what would the Master probably say, if this or that case should come before Him—or what He will say, to this or that man in the Day of Judgment, but what do our *instructions* which He left on record *in His Word* require US, as His Church and the guardian of His ordinances, to do? If he authorizes none but believers to be baptized, then His Church would violate her duty in every case in which she should receive a person as baptized, or retain him as baptized whom she has satisfactory reason to believe was immersed in unbelief. He was baptized not only without His authority, but against His authority. So if He designated any class of persons to administer the rite, the Church violates her duty every time she receives as *His* baptism a rite conferred by one not belonging to this class, and consequently without any authority from Him to confer it.

Here then is, after all, the true issue in regard to this question. To this point every argument must come which touches it at all. Is the administration of baptism limited by the Word of God to any class of persons, or is it open to all who have the physical strength to dip a person in the water and lift him out again? If limited at all, *how* and to *whom* is it limited? If any persons are designated rather than others to be the administrators, then Church members, candidates for baptism, and everybody else, are just as much bound to know who are to baptize as they are to know who are to be baptized, and what is baptism. The law is

in their hands. They must obey it in regard to the one point as well and as willingly as the others. And they are to learn its requirements in the same way. If we baptize none but believers, because none others but believers are commanded to be baptized, and the Church must reject as *no baptism* an immersion conferred in infancy or unbelief, so if certain persons and no others are commanded to confer the rite, it must follow, that if conferred by others without authority from Christ in violation of the law limiting it to those entrusted with its administrations, the Church must reject it as no baptism.

Now, in looking over all the Scriptures to which our author refers, do we find so much as one which intimates that baptism is to be conferred by any one who pleases, whether he is a believer or an unbeliever? The utmost that he discovers is, that "more stress is laid upon the fact of the baptism than upon the administrator of it." But neither he nor any one else will venture to say, that there was no limitation, or, in other words, that it is not a duty which some persons may lawfully perform and others may not. But if it be restricted at all, the restriction must be definite, some may and some may not. But the argument on this point we will give in another place, when we will show how certainly it was limited, and within what bounds.

"But suppose one who has been immersed comes before the Church for membership and gives satisfaction in regard to the following points:

1. He was a penitent believer in Christ.

2. He was immersed because he felt it his duty thus to declare his death to sin, and his union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

3. That he felt bound by that act henceforth to walk in newness of life.

4. That after examination he was convinced that we are the true and only Church of Christ, and therefore he desires admission.

And suppose further, that he could not feel that it was right for him to be immersed by the authority of this true and only Church, as he now considers it to be, because he had been formerly immersed without authority by one not appointed by the Church or recognized as a Church member, but whom in his ignorance, he at the time, believed to be as fully authorized as any one to administer Christ's ordinance; what shall we say to him?"

Let the reader turn back, and look again at Elder Williams' very forceful statement in pages 163 and 164, and then let him read the following little story:

There was a very intelligent and conscientious Welchman who came to this country some years ago. He had an Irish friend, who, like himself, was legally an alien, though long a resident among our people. Just before the last Presidential election, they both felt that it was a duty which they owed to themselves and the country to become legally and formally true citizens of the republic, so that they might enjoy the privileges and perform the duties of citizens. They found the laws concerning naturalization, and read, that before they could be invested with the privilege of citizenship, they must take the oath of allegiance. This the Welch-

man was very willing to do. His friend read it over to him, and with his hand upon the Bible he swore all that it required. The Irishman gave him a certificate stating that he had done so. With this he proceeded to the polls and presented his vote.

Are you a native of this country- asked the judge of elections.

No, sir, I was born in Wales.

Have you been naturalized?

Certainly, your honor. Here is the certificate signed by my friend Patrick O,Donoly, a man that loves this country as well as if he had been born in it.

But the certificate does not show that Patrick was an officer authorized according to the law to administer the oath and receive you as a citizen.

Oh, as to that, your honor, Patrick is no more a citizen than I am myself, but we both love the country and are ready to spill our blood for it.

But the *law* does not recognize the official acts of one not a citizen. Patrick cannot stand outside the pale of citizenship and push you in. You should have gone to a magistrate duly appointed by the government. No one else has any authority to make you a citizen.

True enough, your honor, but then how was I to know all that? My concern was only with what I had to do. *My part* of the business was to take the oath, I could not be expected to enquire into the duties of magistrates. If Patrick has done wrong in administering the oath when he had no right to, he is accountable to the government for himself. I have done *my* duty, I have taken the oath and mean to keep it.

But the oath given by a foreigner and without authority *is in view of the law* no oath at all. We know nothing about Patrick O'Donoly; he is not even a citizen; he has never himself taken the oath he administered to you; we cannot entrust the right of making citizens to those who are not citizens themselves, and have no shadow of authority from the government. If you wish to vote you must be naturalized according to *law.*

Well, your honor, but that is very hard. Patrick told me he could read the oath as well as a native, and so he did, I am sure I swore the very words, if I should do it fifty times over before a magistrate, "it would be a mere repetition of an act without a moral effect," I would be no more bound than I feel myself to be now. If Patrick had no right to give me the certifiacte, that is his matter not mine. I hope your honor will not hold me responsible for another man's sins. I took the oath, and that is all that I had to do.

But you forget, my friend, that *the same authority which required you to take the oath, appointed proper persons to administer it.* No doubt you love the country, and really *meant* to become a citizen, and thought you had done so, but it was your misfortune not to know that a foreigner cannot lawfully make another a citizen of this country, so long as he himself refuses to be made one, nor even afterwards unless specially authorized by the government.

Well, your honor, I am very sorry for it. I wanted to be a citizen, I did the best I knew, and now you drive me back among the aliens; I never can have the privileges of citizenship.

Oh no, my friend, not at all, just go to a *proper officer*, duly qualified and legally authorized, and he will at once admit you.

But that, may it please your honor, I can't do, I have taken the oath once, and I have conscientious scruples about "performing the mere duplicate of an action having no additional meaning or force, not because you find any fault with me," but because my friend, Patrick O'Donoly, took it upon him to administer the oath, when he had no right at all to do it. I do not ask you to sanction his administration of it, but only my taking of it, by receiving me as a citizen. You do not go beyond myself, you say nothing at all about Patrick or his certificate. That may be all wrong, but surely you will not deny that I took the right oath, and I never can take it again.

Would it be a responsibility from which any judge of elections would shrink, to forbid this man the privilege of citizenship, and thus compel him to remain among the unnaturalized until he knows enough of the laws of the country to understand that an act required by law is not performed at all, unless it is performed according to the law which requires it.

Now the Church of Christ is the executive of His laws and the guardian of his ordinances. It is her province not to decide whether His laws are right or wrong, but faithfully to carry out His instructions. Among the most important, all the duties imposed upon her are those which pertain to the reception of members into His kingdom. It has pleased the King to require that those who become members shall first believe and then shall be baptized. Faith is the essential qualifica-

tion for membership, and baptism the ceremony by which they are initiated. It is this they take and seal the oath of consecration to Him, of allegiance to His government. This is a *positive* enactment, a *legal* requisition designating the form and order of admission to His Kingdom. If the believer is to *profess* his faith, this supposes *some* authority in somebody to receive and judge of his profession. If he is to be baptized, this supposes there is *somebody* who is to administer the baptism—just as the requirement of a foreigner to take the oath of allegiance supposes somebody authorized to administer it and certify that it has been taken. Now the authority to administer this ceremony of initiation into Christ's kingdom is either limited by Him to those within the kingdom or it is not. If not thus limited, then Christ has placed the most important of His ordinances in the keeping of His enemies. He has authorized those who will not obey, and who ofttimes mock at His ordinances to be the rightful administrators of it, and requires His Churches to receive their work as though it had been done by themselves. If limited to those within the kingdom, and baptism be the rite of initiation into that kingdom, then, of necessity, it is limited to the baptized, as no others can be reckoned as initiated. If this gives rise to difficulties, the Church cannot help it; if this leads to hard feelings, she is not responsible. If some men are too conscientious to receive the ordinances of those whom Christ appointed, she may pity their errors, she may seek to convince them of their wrong, but she may not receive that as

Christ's baptism which was administered by those to whom He gave no authority to act for Him in regard to this matter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

Having now presented in their own language the best of all the pleadings which we have been able to discover upon the one side of this question, and our replies upon the other, we propose to make a condensed, but fair and honest *abstract*, of the main arguments on both sides. This is the more necessary, because of the various side issues which have been presented in the pleadings and the mass of matter which really had no direct bearing upon the real question under consideration—so that the attention of the reader has often been for pages together entirely diverted from the point about which we are at issue.

But before we proceed, let us distinctly understand what questions we have not attempted, and do not expect to decide, in this little book.

1st. We do not expect to determine here what baptism is. We think we have settled *that* question in the first volume of Theodosia Ernest. We here take it for granted that it is immersion only.

2d. We do not expect to determine here what are the essential features of a true Church of Christ, or what is necessary for membership in the *visible* Kingdom of Christ. *These* questions , we think, are conclusively answered in the second volume of Theodosia Ernest: and we here take for granted that as baptism is the initiatory rite of the visible kingdom, no one is or can be regarded as a member of that kingdom or as having any rights, privileges or *authority* in that Kingdom, *who has not been baptized.*

3d. We have not attempted to ascertain whether a man may or may not lawfully *preach the Gospel* without being baptized. This was not necessary for the answering of the question before us—which was not whether he might *preach*, but whether he might *baptize.* If the reader wishes to investigate *this* question, he will find a very forcible statement of the arguments on one side of it in The Old Landmark Re-set, by Elder J. M. Pendleton, and The Question of the Age, by Elder Jos. Baker. No formal argument upon the other side has, to our knowledge, yet been given in a permanent form. We once began to make one, but found the task too hard. In *this volume*, however, we have taken it for granted that any one in the Church or out, baptized or unbaptized, Christian or infidel, might lawfully *preach* as much as he may choose—we have only questioned his right to administer the ordinances.

4th. We have not, in this volume, attempted to determine whether baptism administered by one who is *unordained* as a *minister* or *evangelist* would be valid. We may have incidentally given our personal opinion upon

this point, but this was not the question before us. If any one feels interested in this decision, he will find in the first article of Elder Waller a very able argument upon it. We have, on our part, taken it for granted that the Church may appoint *any member she pleases* to administer the rite. We only contend that she shall not *go outside the Church* and *outside the Kingdom* and take a man who is *not a member* of either, and invest *him* the right to administer for her an ordinance which he will not receive for himself—or if he has taken it upon himself to do so without her authority that she shall not recognize and sanction the act as though it had been authorized by her.

THE TRUE QUESTION,

And the only one, we have endeavored here to settle at once and forever is, *whether a Baptist Church ought under any circumstances to recognize and receive as Christ's baptism, an immersion administered by an unbaptized administrator, and without any authority, expressed or implied, from a true Church of Christ.*

The question is one of *Church* duty, and that is the form in which it must come up. Our own position may be briefly stated thus. Christ has established in the world a visible kingdom. A visible kingdom supposes visible subjects. There is, therefore, some visible and definite line of demarcation between those who are in, and those who are not in, this visible kingdom. There must be some means by which one visibly leaves the world and enters this Kingdom—like the oath of allegiance by which an alien becomes a citizen

This step, by which one passes from without this visible kingdom to a place within it, is taken in baptism. This is the rite or ceremony of initiation. He who is rightly baptized is in it. He who is not, is out of it. Now, that none may come in but those who are qualified for citizenship, the King has given the charge of the door to those who have gone in—and requires that they admit no one till they are satisfied that he has first been made a citizen *in his heart.* They must have assurance that he is a *penitent believer.* Upon being satisfied of this, they baptize him as they were baptized, and he is then a member as they are members. Thus, and only thus, can any one enter in.

But now, as the King has gone to Heaven, whom has He left to attend to the business of the kingdom in His absence? Who shall appoint the officers? Who shall receive new members? Who shall depose or exclude the unworthy? Who shall provide and do all that is needful for the purity, the permanence and the extension of the kingdom? He provided for all this before he went, by directing as many of the citizens of the kingdom as could conveniently meet together, to assemble and organize themselves into a "*Church,*" which should in its corporate capacity attend to all these matters. it is this Church which must receive the profession of faith, determine on its genuineness and administer the baptism. It is the Church, as a Church, that has charge of the door of entrance into the kingdom. This is equally true whether she acts by herself in the *assembly* of the saints, or by her officers, as elders or evangelists. They have no authority which she has not conferred. If they may baptize, it is because she has authorized

and appointed them to baptize, and thus receive into the kingdom such as give evidence of living faith.

But of whom is each Church to be composed? It must consist of those who are members of the *kingdom*, that is, of those who have believed and been baptized. When a person applies for *Church* membership with her, she inquires whether he is in the kingdom, if not, she must receive him into the kingdom by baptism before she can receive him into her special "ecclesia," or assembly, as a *Church* member. But if a sister Church has received him into the kingdom, she only asks to be certified of that fact. He must be in the *kingdom* before he can come into *a Church* within the kigdom.

Here, then, is the point to be decided. How does one enter into this visible kingdom? We answer, by profession of his faith and baptism. Who must receive and judge of the genuineness of this profession and administer to him this initiatory ordinance—those *in* the kingdom, or those without it? We say, those who are within—and we would say this on the ground that *common sense* requires it should be so even though there were no precept or example affecting the case to be found in the Word of God.

THE COMMON SENSE ARGUMENT.

This argument may be stated thus:

1st. If men are to profess their faith in Christ, this supposes that there must be *somebody* to *receive* that profession. If none are to be initiated into Christ's visible kingdom who have not *true* and *genuine* faith, this

supposes there must be *somebody* to *decide upon* its genuineness If baptism is to be given only after such profession made and its genuineness determined, the same body that is authorized to receive the profession and decide upon its character, must, in all reason, be supposed to have the authority to confer the baptism.

Now, whom do Baptists recognize as authorized to receive the profession of a candidate for citizenship in the kingdom of Christ, and to decide upon its genuineness? They all agree that this is the province of a Baptist Church, and of no other body of people whatever.

It follows, therefore, that a Baptist Church, and nothing else, must be the body that confers, or authorizes the baptism as the initiatory rite of the kingdom.

2d. There are, in the very idea of a kingdom, government, laws and subjects. In *this* kingdom, Christ alone is King. The laws are those, and those *only*, which HE has given, and which we have recorded in His Word. The *officers* are such *only* as he has ordained. The subjects such *only* as HE has designated. The ordinances and observances such *only* as HE has appointed. Now it is admitted that He appointed baptism as the rite of *initiation;* or, at least that *no one can be regarded as legally and formally within this visible kingdom*, however well qualified for admission, *until he shall have been baptized.* Now, what says common sense? Would it be natural, would it be reasonable to invest with the offices of the kingdom those who were not within it? And, most especially, would it not be most egregiously silly to invest a stranger and a foreigner with the most important of all offices—that which determines who shall be members and admits them for-

mally as such? Would it not indicate the very rankest folly to entrust the right to qualify and introduce the citizens to all the privileges of the kingdom to the hands of those who would not themselves go in? Yet this is just what Christ must have done *if he had authorized the unbaptized to administer his baptism.* The very thought that he could have been guilty of such consummate folly is rejected from our mind as irreverent and profane. But we must either receive it as true, or else we must reject these baptisms as invalid; for we cannot claim as *valid* baptism that which is given without Christ's authority.

If Christ did not authorize these men, then they have no authority from him.

They are not within the visible kingdom, and hence he could *not* have conferred upon them this authority unless he conferred it upon those who were not within it.

There is but one way of breaking the force of this reasoning, and that is to show that baptism is *not* the initiatory rite of the visible Kingdom of Christ, and that men are *equally within it* and equally *entitled to hold office there* whether baptized or unbaptized.

If any Baptist who reads this book is prepared to take *this* ground, let him pause here and consider what is the necessary consequence. If baptism is not the initiatory rite of the visible Kingdom of Christ, what is? If it is not entered by baptism, how is it entered? Has it *any* mark or sign by which those who are within it may be distinguished from those who are without it? Does any one say that *faith*, not *baptism*, admits into the kingdom? This is true of what may be called the *invisible* kingdom. The subjects of this kingdom are

all who truly take Christ to be their King: but is it true of the *visible kingdom* which he set up in the world, and which is designed visibly to fill the earth? Is there no distinction between the invisible and the visible? If so, what is it? How does a believer become visibly and openly a member of Christ's people? How does he visibly unite himself to the saints? How does he visibly become invested with the rights and immunities and responsibilities of citizenship among the visible people of Christ? Baptist, surely, if not all denominations, have always contended that this is done *in baptism*. It is in *this* we "put on Christ." It is in *this* rite we are enrolled in His army. In *this* we *openly* take him for our King, and *formally* renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil as rulers over us. In *this* we say openly, that our past life is dead, and we are now new creatures in Christ Jesus. Dead and buried to sin, and alive again in Jesus. If this be not its import, what is it? Let every Baptist answer. But if it is, then how can they who have *not* thus visibly put on Christ, who are *not* thus enrolled among his visible people, who have *not* thus openly renounced all other lords, and visibly espoused him as their head, how can they be counted as visibly and formally the members of his kingdom? To suppose they are or can be, is simply absurd. The man who admits that baptism is the initiatory into the visible kingdom of Christ, as every Baptist must, or cease to be a Baptist, and who yet contends that those are in that kingdom, who have not been baptized, is not worth reasoning with; and he who cannot see that membership in the *invisible* kingdom can give no right to any privilege in the *visible*

before he enters it, must make much less use of his common sense when investigating religious matters than he is accustomed to do in examining other matters.

What relation has a true member of the invisible kingdom to the visible? He is a fit person to be made a subject of it—simply this, and nothing more. He trusts the King. He loves the King. He has determined to obey the King. He wishes to declare this openly, in the way the King commanded, and thus become a member and a subject of the visible kingdom. But suppose he never does it! Is he any more a member than if he were not prepared to do it, and never had desired to do it? The foreigner who adopts a new country as his own, may love the country, approve its laws, understand its government, desire citizenship, and be in all things qualified to become a citizen, but he is *not* a citizen until he has been made one by the process prescribed by the laws. He may be a citizen in his heart, but before he can exercise any of the peculiar privileges of citizenship, he must be made one by the legal, and formal, and visible renunciation of his old allegiance, and taking on himself the new. A man may love a woman tenderly, and there may be no good reason why he should not make her his wife. He may feel that he is espoused to her in his heart as much as though they had been actually and formally united according to the requirements of the law of matrimony, but he is *not* her husband, and has no right to act as though he were her husband until the marriage rite has been performed. Till then, he is not a married man. **And just so, it matters nothing how much a man may**

love the Lord of this kingdom, it matters nothing how well qualified he may be for citizenship or office-holding in the kingdom, if the King has specified a particular way of becoming a citizen, if he has prescribed a particular form or ceremony of initiation, he cannot become a citizen without observing the form. Till this is done, he is no citizen, any more than a man's love makes him a woman's husband before he is married to her.

That the reader may be able the better to judge of the value and force of this argument, we reduce it to the syllogistic form. If the premises are sound, the conclusion is inevitable.

1. If baptism is the initiatory rite of Christ's visible kingdom, then *no one* is or can be a member of that kingdom *who has not been baptized.* This is self-evident.

2. The Pedobaptist administrators of whom we have been speaking, have not been baptized.

3. Therefore they are not members of Christ's visible kingdom.

Thus far, all is certainly very plain.

And now the question arises whether one can lawfully act as an *officer* in the kingdom while he is not so much as a *member* of it? Whether in the absence of all proof that he has done so, we are at liberty to suppose that the King has authorized men who will not so much as be themselves initiated to perform the most important of all the offices of the kingdom, that which admits to and certifies the membership of its subjects.

No other king entrusts the ceremony of receiving strangers and making citizens of them to foreigners.

Even our own government, liberal as it is in all such things, never dreamed of authorizing one foreigner to naturalize another, and confer on him the privileges of citizenship. No society or organization of any sort now existing among men, and having any particular form of initiation or admission to membership, ever entrusted the administration of that form and the reception and initiation of members to those who were not members themselves. They do not authorize men who will not be initiated to stand outside and thrust others in. Now we admit that it does not follow of necessity from all this that he who is the King in Zion may not have done such a thing. His ways are not as ours. And if there were in His Word satisfactory proof that he *had* given such authority to the unbaptized, we must believe that it would not be so silly as it seems. But no one of all those who have reasoned upon that side, has yet found the chapter or the verse in the Old Testament or in the New in which any such authority was conferred. It can no more be found than that to make members of little infants "mewling and puking in their mothers' arms." We do not remember that any one has pretended to have found it. We are asked to suppose its existence, because to deny it would, in their opinion, involve us in a world of trouble, as we shall see hereafter. But can good, sound, common sense suppose any such thing?

Here is the syllogism. Let it be cautiously examined, and if it be false in either of its premises, or its conclusion, let the error be shown.

1. The administration of baptism as the initiatory rite of the Kingdom of Christ is on the part of the administrator not a personal but an *official* act.

2. No *official* act is valid unless duly *authorized* by him to whom the authority belongs.

3. The authority in this case belongs to Christ as King, and he has conferred *no official authority* in His Kingdom upon those *who are not members* of it. These men, according to our previous argument, are *not* members of it, and therefore have no authority, and their baptism is, of consequence, invalid.

SOME ARGUMENTS FROM CONSISTENCY.

We are writing this little book for *Baptists*. The question discussed is a question of *Baptist* polity, or rather of Baptist duty. What is the duty of *Baptist* Churches in certain special cases? We, consequently, may here take it for granted, that whatever course will, if followed out, lead a Baptist to abandon his peculiar sentiments and the cherished practices of his denomination, is a wrong course. Whatever is inconsistent with the known and admitted faith and practice of *Baptist* Christians, we may, in our reasonings with Baptists take to be false. We cannot take this ground in reasoning with Pedobaptists or the world upon such a question as the one before us, for they will say, it is nothing to us how contradictory to Baptist faith, or how inconsistent with Baptist professions or Baptist practices, the recognition of the official acts of the unbaptized may be, Baptist faith, Baptist profession, and Baptist practice are all wrong together, and the more incon-

sistent with them any course may be, the more likely is it to be right. But in reasoning with a Baptist, we may take it for granted, that he believes the Baptists are right, and that whatever is plainly and palpably unbaptistic must be wrong.

Now, I propose to show that, *if the immersions administered by Pedobaptists ministers are good and lawful valid baptism according to the Scriptures,* THEN BAPTIST CHURCHES, *as such,* HAVE NO AUTHORITY IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST, AND OUGHT TO HAVE NO EXISTENCE. THEY ARE VILE USURPERS OF AUTHORITY WHICH CHRIST NEVER GAVE THEM. They have taken away from their own members the liberty which they had in Christ. They have deceived themselves and endeavored to impose upon the world by claiming to be the true and Scriptural Churches of Jesus Christ, when they were something very different. These are very serious charges. One should not make them, unless he is very sure that he can make them good. But, we are willing to take the responsibility; we have carefully counted the cost; we have earnestly and consistently explored all the ground; we have weighed well the facts and arguments, one by one, and we have deliberately come to the conclusion, that the Baptist who yields this one point, may by logical necessity be driven to yield all. Let every Baptist ponder well the argument which we are now about to present, and if it does not make this proposition plain, let him show where it fails. If it does make it plain, let him decide whether he will abandon the cherished principles of the denomination to which he belongs—the very existence of Baptist Churches as such—for the sake of

recognizing as valid baptism an unauthorized immersion. Here is the

ARGUMENT. NUMBER THREE.

The administration of baptism is not a personal, but an *official* act. It is so regarded by all Baptist Churches. It is an act which the individual performs not as a *man* but as a *minister*, as the servant of the Church. The Church claims and exercises the right to determine who shall be baptized and who shall baptize them. Some think that the Church must decide in *every particular case* as it presents itself, by application for baptism; and some think, that when she confers ordination upon one as an elder or evangelist, she therein invests him with the right to baptize, and when she cannot be conveniently consulted to determine upon the propriety of baptizing any particular applicant. But in any case, the authority is derived from the Church to the administrator. The fact, that the Church *gives* it, shows that she claims to have authority to give it. The fact that she gives it to some and not to all, shows that she claims the right to deny it; and does deny it, even to most of her own members.

Now the Churches are either right in this, or they are wrong. They either have this authority or they have not. If they have it, it must have been conferred by Christ, the Head and King. The Church is His executive, and acts by His authority and in His name. If HE did not confer on her the authority to appoint the administrators of baptism, she has

certainly usurped it: she has come between Christ and the convert who desires baptism. Those who contend for the validity of these immersions do it on the ground that the administrator is not designated by Christ or his authority, see Wayland (p. 17.) "The only command is, to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." "This is the whole of the command, there is no direction given beyond, *nor have we a right to make any.*" To the question, whether baptism administered by a Pedobaptist, &c., is a fulfillment of the commission, Eld. Waller, (page 46,) answers "that the baptism is strictly in accordance with the commission unless it prescribes the *administrator*, as absolutely as it does the mode and the subject." And Elder Johnson, (p. 97,) says, "After all, the essence of true spiritual Gospel baptism consists in the immersion in water of a spiritual believer upon a profession of faith in Christ *by whomsoever* the ordinance may be administered." Now what I say is this, if Christ has not designated the administrator, or given authority to the Churches to do it, then Baptist Churches are vile usurpers of this authority to the extent they have been accustomed to exercise it. They have no more right to give or deny the right to administer baptism, than they have to make a pope. If Christ said to the convert, "Be Baptized," and made no provision for the baptizer, then the new convert must choose a baptizer for himself. Then, as we showed, page 35, every man, and every woman, and every child, who has the physical strength to put another in the water and take him out again is an authorized administrator of baptism. And since God has authorized every

convert to choose his own administrator, by what authority can any Baptist Church claim the right to say who may or who may not baptize? How dare she come between her members and their duties or their privileges, forbidding brothers to baptize their sisters, and husbands their wives, and each and every one, to administer Christ's ordinance to all who may desire his services! How dare she come between the convert and his duty by saying to him, you have indeed been ordered by the Saviour to submit to baptism, but before you do so, you must come to us and profess your faith, and be baptized by one whom we may appoint! Who does not see that on the ground assumed by the defenders of the validity of these immersions, that Baptist Churches are *vile usurpers of authority* which Christ never conferred upon them. So far from being the *executors of* HIS *laws*, they are *rivals* and REBELS, setting up their own authority above their Master's. Brethren, let us not continue thus to sin against God. Let us at once repent and go back to the simplicity of the Gospel. Let us appoint no more administrators of baptism! Let us require no more professions of faith to be made to the Church. Let us acknowledge our fault! Let us say to the other denominations and to the world, that we, as Baptists, have been laboring from the time of the Apostles under a most grievous error. We have always thought that Christ gave the authority to confer his ordinance of baptism upon the Churches, and those whom the Churches might appoint. Our practice has always been founded on this belief. But now we find this was a sad mistake; Doctors of Divinity, after eighteen hundred years of careful study have discovered, that the

administrator is not provided for at all. No one was designated by Christ, nor was the Church authorized to designate any. "*The whole command is, be baptized. There is no directions given beyond, and we have no right to make any.*" We are sorry we had not made this discovery at an earlier day. It would have saved the lives of many thousands of our martyred brethren. But as we love the truth and wish to be consistent with ourselves, we now proclaim to all the world that we no longer claim the usurped authority we have so long been accustomed to exercise, and we herby inform all members of Baptist Churches that each and every one of them has the same right and authority to administer baptism which we have been accustomed to confer upon our ministers; and we further notify all who may hereafter be converted to Christ that *it is just as lawful, according to the Scriptures*, for them to apply for and receive bapism from those who are not Church members at all, as it is to seek it of a Baptist Church and receive it of a Baptist minister: for it has now been discovered by learned doctors that, "*after all, the essence of true*" *Christian "baptism consists in the immersion in water of a true believer upon profession of his faith by whomsoever the ordinance may be administered.*"

Let the Churches which receive these immersions as true and valid Scriptural baptism do this and they will be consistent with themselves.

ARGUMENT NUMBER FOUR. CONSISTENCY—CONTINUED.

But, some Church may say, We receive these immersions as baptism, but not upon *this ground*. We do not

believe that Christ made no provision for the administrator. We do not believe that every man, saint or sinner, professor or non-professor, minister or layman, in the Church or out, is equally authorized by Christ to administer His baptism. Nor do we believe that baptism administered *without authority from Him* is His baptism, or to be received as such by any of His Churches. But we believe these Pedobaptist ministers *are true ministers of Jesus Christ*, though laboring under some very important errors, and that *as his ministers they are duly authorized and commissioned to administer His ordinances.*

Very good. This places the matter upon quite a different ground. It is not now contended that *every man* has authority to baptize, but only true and actual ministers of Jesus Christ. But now let us see if this Church is any less inconsistent than the others. Must she not, like the others, repudiate and deny the faith and practice of the Baptist denomination in all ages and places? Let us see. Has it not ever been, and is it not now the practice of the Baptists, when one of these administrators is convinced of his errors and receives the true baptism from a Baptist Church, to *ordain* him to the ministry before we recognize him as a true minister, authorized to administer the ordinances? We think it is. But surely we have very inconsistent in this thing. If he *was a minister*, and as a minister, was really authorized to administer Christ's ordinances, upon what ground would any Baptist Church have dared to take away his authority, or treat him as though it had never been given? A man is sometimes deposed from the ministry *for doing wrong*, but what Church would

dare depose this man for doing right? Yesterday, while he was living in open disobedience to the Lord's command, *he was a good and lawful minister*, with full authority to confer the ordinance which he would not receive. To-day, he has obeyed and been baptized, and by that act has forfeited his office. *We have deposed him from the ministry, not for any sin, but for obeying the Lord.* We treat him just as though he never had been a minister. We ordain him just as we would a man who never had claimed to be a minister. While he was living in open rebellion against the requirements of the commission from which he claimed authority to preach and to baptize, we recognized him as a minister, and received his official acts as valid and lawful. But now he has obeyed the law, and united, as was his duty, with the visible Kingdom of Christ, and we will not recognize him as having any authority at all until we have conferred it by a Scriptural ordination. Is this a specimen of Baptist consistency? Is this the way to convince the world that we believe what we profess?

ARGUMENT NUMBER FIVE.

But here, again, is another inconsistency. We recognize these unbaptized administrators as ministers, and *having authority* to administer the ordinances of the visible kingdom of Christ. We must do this, or else reject their administrations as unauthorized, that is, without authority. But we do not regard any *baptized* person, any member of a Baptist Church, as having such authority, *unless it has been conferred on him by*

the Church. Now one of two things must be true. Either there is something in being UN-*baptized* which gives a man peculiar rights and authority in the Kingdom of Christ, or these men have received authority from some source as truly and as fully authorized to confer it as a Baptist Church. If nothing but a Baptist Church can give this authority to a *baptized* man, to a *Baptist* Church member, it must require authority *equal at least* to that of such a Church to confer it on the *un*baptized. This is self-evident. Some of these men have derived their authority as ministers from Episcopal or Methodists BISHOPS, and it follows that *Episcopal and Methodist Bishops have authority in Christ's Kingdom* to appoint the administrators of baptism, *equal or superior to that of any Baptist Church.* The Churches can only appoint a baptized Church member, but these lords over God's heritage are acknowledged by Baptists to have the authority to appoint the *unbaptized*, and the *scoffers at baptism*, and Baptist Churches must recognize their official acts as of equal validity with those performed by a Baptist minister. And as we recognize these BISHOPS as having power in the kingdom of Christ to appoint the administrators of baptism. So we must recognize the power that *makes the bishops* as having the right to confer on them this authority, to appoint baptizers for Christ. The General Conference, therefore, takes rank in the visible kingdom of Christ, not only equal to, but far above a Baptist Church.—This, can only appoint, or ordain, a baptized Church member to administer Christ's ordinance: but the conference can appoint and authorize men not merely to baptize, *but to create baptizers* among the un-

baptized. But not to dwell upon this point, we will only ask of every Baptist Church to consider whether it is prepared to recognize the authority of Episcopal and Methodist bishops, Lutheran synods or Presbyterian councils or presbyteries, in appointing men to administer the ordinances of Christ's kingdom, *as equal to or above her own.* If she does *not* thus recognize it, she cannot receive these baptisms on the ground that they were conferred by *ministers* duly *authorized,* since these ministers received all their authority from these sources. Admit their official acts are *valid,* and they will drive us by logical necessity to admit that they have *authority from Christ to perform them,* and as the only authority they claim comes through these channels, they drive us to admit *that they are true Churches and true ministers of Jesus Christ,* bishops, conference, and all.

ARGUMENT NUMBER SIX.

Once more. Baptist churches have ever been accustomed to reject the officials acts of even baptized men whom they have themselves ordained to the ministry, so soon as they discover *that they are unsound in faith or practice.* If, therefore, these Pedobaptist immersers were members of Baptist Churches, and taught and practiced infant baptism as they are now accustomed to do, they would be deposed from the ministry and excluded from the Church, just as soon as the proper steps could be taken to accomplish the object. Such has been the uniform practice of our Churches. But it must now be evident that it is very wrong, for so

far from rejecting the official acts of unbaptized men who teach and practice such things, we receive them as Scriptural and valid; we recognize them as lawfully appointed administrators of the ordinances of God's House. Surely there is something in *not* being baptized which recommends a man with great power to the Baptist heart. If a *baptized man* should, as a *Baptist minister,* but sprinkle a single infant in the name of Christ to make it a member of His kingdom, his brethren would disown him, and so far from recognizing him as a valid and lawful administrator of Christ's baptism, they would at once *depose* him from all official station, and even exclude him from the communion and fellowship of the Churches. But an UN*baptized* man do this *habitually* and even *mock* at the immersion which he occasionally and with reluctance confers on a believer, and yet these same Baptist Churches which were so hard upon their brother will cordially receive this man's work and thus *recognize him as having authority to perform it.* Is not this consistency indeed!

ARGUMENT NUMBER SEVEN.

But here is another inconsistency. Let those Baptist Churches which admit these immersions as lawful and valid baptism consider what they will do with it. Every Baptist Church is accustomed, when any one applies to her for admission into the kingdom of Christ by baptism, to make a careful examination into the nature of his faith, his religious experience and the like, in order that she may determine whether he is a fit subject for the kingdom or not. If she regards him as

worthy and well qualified she directs him to be baptized; if not, she rejects his application. Now, that fact, that she does this thing *as a Church of Christ*, shows that Baptists suppose that the Church is *authorized* by Christ to do it. She either is, or she is not. If not, she is a *usurper* of authority in the kingdom of Christ. She takes it on herself to decide who may and who may not become its visible and actual members, when Christ gave her no such right or power. If, however, she is authorized, and does this in Christ's name upon His commandment and by His commission, then every time she admits as valid, that is, lawful and Scriptural a baptism which she did not authorize, she admits that those who did authorize it had equal authority from Christ to decide this question, as she has herself. If this was done by a sister Baptist Church, she by receiving the act recognizes her sister as equally with herself empowered to determine who shall be baptized; and it is precisely upon this ground that she is accustomed to receive the baptism thus conferred, as though it had been conferred by herself. But now it is self-evident that, upon the same principle, when she receives as Scriptural and lawful valid baptism an immersion conferred by the authority of a *Presbyterian session*, she recognizes that session as equally with herself, empowered by Christ to determine who ought to be baptized. When she receives one conferred upon the recommendation of a *Methodist class leader*, she acknowledges him as having from Christ equal authority with herself or a sister Baptist Church, to decide this question. When she receives one conferred upon his own responsibility by an *Episcopal priest*, she recognizes

him as having from Christ equal authority with herself to determine who may and who may not be baptized into the visible kingdom of her Lord. Receiving him as baptized, she recognizes him as being lawfully within the kingdom, and of course, as having been lawfully introduced. There is no logical possibility of evading this conclusion. If Baptists think that this is true, if they believe that Christ has thus divided the authority equally among all who claim the right to exercise it, let them be consistent with themselves. Let them no longer set up any claims to be the *Churches* of Christ; all others are as much entitled to the name and the authority as they are. Let them no longer complain of the "session" as a power unappointed and unauthorized in the Word. Let them no longer speak of the class leader and the priest as claiming and exercising authority not granted to them in the Scriptures. They lay no claim to any higher or more important power than the power to determine who may and who may not become members of Christ's visible kingdom upon the earth. And this is granted them. They hold the keys of the kingdom. Why contend with them about trifles, when we have granted the great and all controlling essential of Church dominion? Let us come out like candid men and own our faults. Let us proclaim to all the world, that we have been for these eighteen hundred years deceived in regard to the teachings of the Word of God upon this point. Let us acknowledge that we have been usurpers in the kingdom of our Lord, claiming to our Churches the right to decide who were and who were not fit subjects for admission, when in fact, we had no more authority in the case than a Methodist class leader or a Presbyterian session,

or a Popish priest, and these, we have been accustomed to believe and teach, had none at all. Let every Church that receives as Scriptural and valid one of these immersions do this, and she will be thus far consistent.

ARGUMENT NUMBER EIGHT.

But there is still another inconsistency. It is this. After a Baptist Church has determined that any applicant for baptism is a fit and proper subject for the kingdom and ought to be baptized; if a Pedobaptist minister or any other unbaptized man were proposed to her as a suitable person to administer the ordinance for her, she would reject the proposal with stern disdain. She would not so much as think of such a thing as permitting him to baptize for the purpose of admitting *by her authority* into the kingdom one whom she had herself just counted worthy of admission. *That* she would regard as an outrage upon all Baptist faith and practice. Such a thing has not been known. But yet when the person has been designated to baptism without her authority, by a class leader, session, priest, bishop, or somebody whom she denies to have any authority whatever, and when the baptism is to be conferred, not to introduce him into a Baptist Church, but into a body which she condemns as being not a Church, and whose members, however good and pious they may be, she cannot recognize as members of Christ's visible kingdom at all; then, strange to tell, she sees nothing illegal—nothing unscriptural—nothing more than a pardonable irregularity! Then the administrator is amply

authorized, and the transaction is lawful and valid!! Surely Baptists are a wonderful people!!!

ONCE MORE.

The above eight arguments,from considerations of consistency, apply equally to those who are called Close Communion, and those who are called Open Communion Baptists. Most of the denomination in our country are, however, strict communionists. I propose now to make an argument which will show that those who admit these immersions as valid baptisms, must of logical necessity also admit the utter fallacy of any plea upon which we have been accustomed to rest the defence of our practice, in regard to the observance of the Supper.

ARGUMENT NUMBER NINE.

What are the grounds on which we refuse to commune with Pedobaptist and Campbellite Churches at their Table, and why is it that we cannot invite them to commune at ours? Whatever answers we may give to these questions may be resolved into this one, viz.: *We do not regard them as true and Scriptural Churches of Jesus Christ.* Either because they have not been baptized, or because they hold and teach, or practice, what we regard as contrary to the requirements of the Gospel. We need not go into the particulars. If they are unbaptized, we say they cannot be true Churches for HIS Churches according to the Scriptures, were composed of baptized believers.

If they yield submission to the rule of men in matters of religion or Church polity, they are not HIS Churches, for these, according to the Scriptures, have none above themselves but only Christ, their Head and King.

If they teach, or hold, or practice, what is essentially at variance with the great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, they are not HIS Churches, for they rejoice in the truth. If not His Churches, we, as His people, can have with them no *Church* fellowship. We can give them no official countenance. We thus protest against their perversion of the Gospel. It is not merely that they have not been baptized, and we regard baptism as a prerequisite to communion. It is because they are not Gospel Churches, not Scriptural Church members. We would no more invite a body of baptized persons who believed and practiced as they do, than we would them. We would at once refuse to commune with any of our own brethren, who should fall into the same errors. We would at once disown a Baptist Church which should thus deny the faith. We have always been accustomed thus to do. It is thus we fulfill the solemn injunction of the Apostle, "Now we command you brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourself from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received from us," 2 Thess. iii. 6. Now, if these are true Churches of Christ, they have equal authority in the Kingdom of Christ with any other of His Churches. If they are true Churches, their members are as much entitled to all Church privileges as ours are. If they are true Churches, their ordinances stand upon the same ground with our own. We have no good reason

to reject either their members or their ordinances. We must receive them both. If they are *not* true Churches, we cannot *in our Church capacity* recognize either the one or the other.

Here, then, is the basis of our action in regard to this question of our communion. Regarding it as a Church ordinance, something done and observed in our official capacity as a Church of Jesus Christ, we are compelled to keep it separate from those who are not true Church members.

But now, mark this: *When ,as a Church, we recognize* as valid and Scriptural, *a baptism conferred by the authority of any one of those organizations which claim to be his Churches, we do by that act recognize that body as a true Church of Jesus Christ,* and thus undermine and destroy the very foundations upon which we rest our arguments for strict communion, the only foundation upon which we can build a reliable and consistent argument. To say that we do *not* so recognize it, is to say that we can recognize as Scriptural and valid an *official act*, while we deny that those who performed it as such had any *official authority* to perform it; or else that those who are *not* Churches of Jesus Christ have the same official authority to confer His ordinances, as those that are His true lawful Churches according to the Scriptures, which would be equal to saying that Christ gave no authority to His Churches to determine who should receive or who should administer His ordinances, and consequently, every Baptist Church that claims and exercises such authority in His name and as His Church, is a usurper and deceiver. Or, to reverse the process of the argument, we must admit that

every Baptist Church is a usurper and deceiver: or else that it really has been invested by Christ with the authority which it claims and exercises when it decides who may be baptized, and who may be the administrators of baptism. If it have been thus invested *as a Church*, and none but true Churches are thus invested, then those other organizations, or those other individuals, who claim and exercise the right to determine who may be baptized, and who may administer baptism, are usurpers and deceivers. They do not possess the authority which they claim and exercise. Christ never conferred it on them. Every exercise of this power is an act of rebellion against Christ, an act of usurped authority in His kingdom and of deception towards the world. The Church that recognizes the act, recognizes this deception as the truth, this usurped authority as legal, and this rebellion as obedience.

Brethren, let us be consistent with ourselves. Let us not stultify and contradict our own reasonings. Let us not fear to carry out our positions to their legitimate and logical consequences. If we dare not do this, let us abandon the positions. Truth will always bear this trial. If we are right, let us be *all* right; if we are wrong, let us give up all and begin anew. If we receive the *official acts* of these Pedobaptist sessions, class leaders, bishops and priests, as Scriptural and valid, let us no longer befool ourselves and the world, by pretending that they have no authority from Christ to perform them. If they *have* the authority, then upon our own cherished principles, they are true Churches and true ministers, lawfully organized and ordained, and there

is no reason why we should not fellowship and commune with them as such.

THE ARGUMENT FROM BAPTIST BROTHERHOOD, NUMBER TEN.

While it is freely admitted that every particular Church has full authority to manage its own affairs, and is responsible to Christ alone for the way in which she performs her part as the executive of His kingdom, yet it must also be conceded, that it is at least very desirable that no one Church shall so far depart from what her sister Churches are known to regard as right, as to cause any feelings of disapprobation of her course in their minds. The Baptist family should be one. This should especially be true in regard to the character of the membership. It is surely a sad thing for some Churches to receive and regard as Church members, persons whom other Churches do not and cannot regard as such, because, in their opinion, they have not been baptized; and all Baptists hold that baptism is an essential prerequisite to Church membership. Now every time that any Church receives a member upon a Pedobaptist, Campbellite, or any other unauthorized immersion, she introduces into the Baptist family a person whom very many of the Churches, and probably a number of her own members, do not regard as having been baptized any more than if he had been sprinkled in his infancy for baptism. They are obliged to fellowship this individual or raise a disturbance. Now if this were *necessary* and *unavoidable*, if the opposite course involved any violation of Church duty, it might

be claimed that it must be endured. But since the most learned and earnest advocates of these immersions presents no *Scripture* that *requires* the Church to receive them. Since they contend for them rather as something pardonable and admissible, than something needful and essential, since Elder Fuller, probably the most learned and eloquent of them all, could see good reasons why he should not ask the Churches to receive HIM upon such an immersion, however ready he may be to insist upon their receiving others—in short, *since* IT IS NO SIN *to insist upon their being baptized* in such a way and by such authority, that no one can object to the validity of the administration, we contend that it ought always to be done out of regard to the consciences of those who would be aggrieved and offended at a different course.

"If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend." Here is the great principle of Christian practice. In things indifferent yield everything for peace. To those on one side of this question, this is a matter of indifference—that is, they do not regard what they would call a repetition of the baptism as, under such circumstances, sinful. It is only, they think, unnecessary. It may be dispensed with, but if performed, no harm is done. While on the other hand, to dispense with it, is looked upon as disobedience to Christ, as a neglect or refusal to obey His command to be baptized, as a recognition of the official authority in the visible kingdom of Christ, of those who do not so much as belong to that kingdom, as the giving up of all the distinctive peculiarities of Baptist Churches. Scarce any Church can probably be found that would

be *unanimous* in receiving such a baptism, and if not, the minority, be it large or small, will be compelled to fellowship a person as a Church member whom they conscientiously believe has never been rightly baptized according to Christ's commandment.

If it be objected that to require the baptism might wound the conscience of the candidate, the question will arise, to whose conscience should a Church of Christ pay the most regard in matters of Church duty—that of a stranger not yet within the kingdom, or that of her own established members? Let him wait until his conscience has been instructed. And if it can never be so taught, that it will cease to regard an ordinance conferred without any authority from Christ to the administrator or those who appointed him, as the true ordinance of Christ, it may be a question, whether he will ever make a valuable member of a Baptist Church.

But suppose that a Church should be entirely united upon this subject, and the candidate shall be admitted. He afterwards desires membership in another Church in which they are equally united in the opinion that he should not have been received. He presents his letter, and asks for membership; the brethren must show apparent discourtesy to the recommendation of a sister Church, or else receive into their number one whom they all with one accord believe to be an unbaptized man. Why should Baptists continue to create such troubles for the Churches and such difficulties for the brethren, when there is confessedly *no necessity for it?* When all that is contended for, may be yielded without sin. When such an advocate for it as Elder R. Fuller, of Baltimore, not only grants that it may

be done, but actually did it in his own very remarkable and very instructive case, [see page 66.] Why not do in every case as he did in his? Let those who consider the baptism as *invalid* correct it as a wrong, and let those who regard as only irregular, correct as irregular; and let us all be, if not of one heart and one mind in regard to the reasons of our practice, yet all alike in the practice itself. Are they not disturbers of the peace and unity of the Churches who insist upon forcing upon us these half-made Baptists.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Thus far we have reasoned the case upon general principles which we have taken to be self-evident, admitted by those upon the other side, or which we have established by conclusive proof as we went along. We have seen,

1st. That every man's *common sense* would teach him that the same body which is designated by the Scriptures to receive the profession of faith which Christ requires as preliminary to baptism and judge of its genuineness, must be authorized to determine who should be baptized, and who should baptize him. Baptists hold that this body is a true Church of Christ assembled in its Church capacity, and no one else.

2d. As baptism is the rite of initiation into the kingdom, *common sense* would teach that no man can be in the kingdom who has not been baptized. And common sense would further teach, that it would be unnatural and unreasonable, simple and foolish, to invest with the most important of all the offices of the

kingdom, (that of determining who should be members of it,) those who are not members themselves, who, while they claim to love the King, refuse to be initiated according to His commandment. Common sense would take it for granted, in the absence of proof to the contrary, that the officers of the kingdom must belong to the kingdom. To authorize or administer baptism is an *official* act. No official act is valid, unless it is authorized by Him to whom the authority belongs. The authority, in this matter, belongs to Christ. Christ, as King, has conferred no *official* authority on those who are not in His kingdom. These unbaptized baptizers are not in it, and, therefore, cannot be authorized, and consequently their official acts must be invalid.

3d. We have seen by a succession of reasonings, in which we invite the best logicians of all the advocates for the reception of these immersions to show any fatal fallacy that the recognition of these immersions as Scriptural and valid baptism, must, of logical necessity, drive us to the conviction that Baptist Churches claiming and exercising authority in the kingdom of Christ to decide who may be baptized or who shall be baptizers, are usurpers and deceivers. and ought to have no existence, and that every time they recognize these immersions as valid baptism they virtually repudiate and deny all the cherished principles and practices of the denomination to which we belong.

But after all, such a question as this cannot be ultimately decided upon such grounds as these. The ultimate appeal must be to the Word of God. "What saith the Scripture? How readest thou?" must be the questions earnestly asked, and candidly answered before we

can be sure of our standing. If common sense would determine our position, as certainly it might and must in the absence of Scripture teaching to the contrary, yet common sense itself, must yield to the Word of God, if the two should ever come in opposition. If regard for Baptist consistency would determine it, consistency itself must yield to the Word of God if they should come in opposition. Much as I love the Baptist name, proud as I am of Baptist history, thoroughly as I am convinced that we are right, yet if the Word of God can be found to condemn our faith and practice in any one particular, I will abandon that one thing. If that, like the matter under consideration, is one that is so fundamental, that to admit that we are wrong in it, will destroy the very foundations of our Churches and tumble into utter ruin all the frame work of our organization; though I should ponder well and study carefully, one by one each text and passage which was thought to bear the words of condemnation, yet once convinced, I would clasp my Bible to my heart and hurry away from the dissolving wreck, and as I ran, would call back to every one who loved the Lord, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues."

To the Law, then, and the Testimony, we must come at last. And now our inquiry is, whether we can find, recorded in the Word of God, any single text or passage which will require, or even justify us in thus denying the faith of our fathers and repudiating the practice of our Churches.

Is there a single precept which *requires* a man to baptize others who will be himself baptized?

Is there a single precept which so *authorizes* him to do it?

Is there a single precept which so much as *permits* him to do it?

Is there a single example in which any one but John who bore a special commission to *introduce* the rite and who could not be baptized because there was no one to baptize him. Is there, besides his, a single example of one baptizing in Christ's name who would not receive baptism by His authority. Or, in other words, is there a single example after baptism was introduced as the initiatory rite of Christ's visible kingdom of any one who had not been baptized administering the rite to others and pushing them into the kingdom they would themselves not enter, administering to others by Christ's command, the rite they would not receive by His command. If there is one such precept, if there is one such example, we yield the point at once. Let us not be found fighting against God. What, then, are the Scriptures upon which these "Doctors" and other learned and eloquent advocates of the practice we are opposing rest its claims. They surely will not ask us to receive a doctrine, which, if carried out, would be thus fatal, as we have seen, to the very existence of our denomination, without *some* Scripture authority. They know, or ought to know, that Baptists attach very great importance to Thus saith the Lord, while they care comparatively very litle about what the "Doctors" say. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose they have done the best they can in finding Scripture for the course they recommend. They could hardly expect that Baptist Churches would be induced permanently to follow any practice which

the Scriptures do not require, or which at the very least they do not authorize, as the Churches of Jesus Christ, the executive in His kingdom, they *must* be governed by His law. They know no other law than what is recorded in His Word. What is there, they are bound to obey. What is not there, they will not have as a law for them.

Now, let my reader pause, and deliberately turn back and carefully collect all the Scripture which each and all of the advocates of the validity of these immersions have discovered and presented. Some of them have quoted Latin, but who has quoted Scripture to sustain this strange doctrine which they seek to impose upon the Churches of Christ? "Doctor Wayland" says, page 18, It is time that we, above all others, "should walk in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not be entagled with any yoke of bondage," Gal. v. And what is this liberty? Is it the liberty to dispense with the requisitions which Christ imposed upon His Churches, in that, He will have them withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh not according to the Gospel. Is it that his Churches shall be free to recognize as equal in authority to themselves, those to whom Christ gave no authority. Recognize as Churches those who will not be baptized. As administrators of baptism, those who mock at baptism! As having authority from Him to execute the chiefest office in His kingdom. Is *this* the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free? Turn to the passage, and you will see that Paul was warning the Galatians against this very danger of being mixed up with, and made subservient to other people and other teachers out side the true

Churches of Christ. It was the Judaizing teachers who sought to convince them that it was not enough simply to obey Christ, but they must also pay some regard to Moses, against whose yoke he was warning them, and not against a too strict adherence to the very letter of Chist's commandments. Like them, these Pedobaptiss go back to Moses and the Jews for the great arguments on which they found the doctrines and practices in which, as Baptists, we mainly differ from them, and does it indicate a case that we shall not be entangled with them, nor brought in any degree in bondage to them, regard ourselves as bound to receive their reluctantly conferred baptism, and recognize them thus as having authority in the Kingdom of Christ at least equal to, if not above, our own. To every Baptist Church, I say with Paul, be not entangled with any such yoke. He who can see in this any authority to Pedobaptist ministers or Pedobaptist Churches to confer the baptism they will not receive must have wonderful powers of vision.

"Doctor Johnson" says, page 19, that he finds in 1 Cor. xiv. the nearest approach to a description of the manner in which a minister of the gospel is to be appointed. "The brethren of a religious society are to exercise their gifts. Those who are blessed with the aptitude to teach will show it, and its recognition by the body is the authority to preach, and the authoriy to preach includes the authority to baptize. I therefore," he adds, "receive those who are recognized as preachers by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and all orthodox believers, and receiving them as preachers, I receive them also as *baptizers.*" This

might do very well if the Corinthian Church had been a company of unbaptized or sprinkled Pedobaptist believers. But was it such? Was it a Methodist, or a Presbyterian, or an Episcopal Church, and were these brethren holding, and teaching, and practicing such errors as would exclude one from a Baptist Church? If so, then Baptist Churches may possibly find in the 14th Chapter of 1 Corinthians some shadow of authority for the reception of the official acts of these modern preachers of false doctrines and Church-subverting practices. But if, on the other hand, the Corinthian Church was a Church of baptized Christians, nothing can be learned from it except how to make a *Baptist* minister. If any one will turn to the chapter and read it, he will see that if anybody was made a minister in this Corinthian assembly it was done *by the Church.* It refers, v. 23, to what is done when the *whole Church* has come together into one place. But the Episcopal, the Methodist, or the Presbyterian *Church* never all came together, and never *can* all come together into one place to make a minister or to do any thing else, and this would of itself show that *they* were not referred to, even if such things existed in the Apostles' days.

He who can see in the directions given to a *local* Church of *baptized* believers for the developing and recognition of their gifts of teaching among its own members any authority for Methodist class-leaders or Presbyterian sessions to determine who shall be baptized, or to Episcopal bishops, or Methodist Conferences, or Presbyterian Presbyteries, none of which claim to be Churches at all to create preachers and appoint baptizers, must have wonderful powers of vision. Let any

Baptist Church before whom this question is pending, have the whole chapter carefully read and see which verse contains the authority? We cannot find it.

"Doctor Waller" (p. 43,) quotes the great commission, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. But he quotes it to prove just what we contend for, viz.: "That the primitive practice was clear—the path in which the holy men of old walked is so plain that a wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein. Then all who believed and were baptized were admitted into the Church." He also quotes John ix. 2, and Matt. xxviii. 16—but only to show that they were not rebels who would not be baptized, that in Christ's time were the administrators of baptism, but his own obedient disciples—made and baptized other disciples. And he also quotes, 1 Cor. xi. 2, "Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you"—but he does not pretend that *this* gives any authority to the unbaptized to baptize believers.—See page 50.

"Dr. Fuller" refers to 1 Pet. iii. 21, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." He quotes, however, only part of the verse, and that as though it read "*baptism* is the answer of a good conscience towards God," and from this he infers that if the candidate *thinks* he is baptized then he is baptized. We might question whether it is the baptism that is here called the answer of a good conscience. Is not the meaning rather that it is *not* the baptism itself,

but "that answer of a good conscience" which the Christian has through the resurrection of Christ symbolized in the baptism by which we are now saved? Such seems to us the sense of the apostle. But grant that baptism is symbolically the answer of a good conscience, it is still in reality an immersion in water, and that immersion must be administered by somebody, and now the question is, whether the fact that baptism symbolizes the answer of a good conscience gives any authority upon those who have not received it to confer it upon others. If baptism is the answer of a good conscience, is the immersion on that account to be administered by those to whom Christ gave no authority in the commission? In other words, does this text authorize unbaptized rejectors of Christ's baptism to baptize others and thus initiate them into the kingdom they will not enter? He who can see in it such authority must have wonderful powers of vision. We are blind to any such discovery.

For a full examination of the question, whether the Church is to decide this matter by reference to the conscience of the applicant, see Review of Fuller, page 71—turn back and read it again. He also quotes the commission, "He that believeth and is baptized." "The party," he says, "has believed and been baptized." And, like Wayland, he seems to think this is the end of controversy. But did he never observe that the commission as recorded by Matthew and Mark contains no direct command to any one to be baptized, but only an implied one. *There is a direct command* to certain persons to baptize, and this *implies* that certain other persons are to be baptized. But these "Doctors" refer

to it as though the direct command was given to the new convert to be baptized without any reference at all by implication or otherwise to the baptizer.

Let the Church that is about to take their advice founded upon this commission just turn to it and read it once more—Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16—read the whole in connection.

Go YE, therefore, and teach all nations, BAPTIZING THEM in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Go YE into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. The whole record shows what the commission really was. And now let the Church decide whether it was a command given directly to the new made disciples to be baptized or the Churches to baptize them. Why the very fact that "Doctor Fuller" calls it a *commission,* shows that if he thought about it for a single moment he could not have failed to see that it was addressed to the *baptizers* and not to the candidates. Those to whom this was addressed were "*commissioned,*" that is, authorized and sent out to do some designated thing. This thing was to teach and to baptize. The persons to be taught and to be baptized were not *commissioned* to select their teachers and baptizers from whatever company they pleased. *They* were not *commissioned* at all—they had no authority conferred upon them at all—they were not *sent out at all.* The only relation which they have to the commission is incidental, and arises from the fact that if those commissioned are to teach, it supposes somebody to be taught. If those

commissioned are to baptize, it supposes somebody to be baptized. Those to be taught are "all nations," "every creature." Those to be baptized are those who have "been taught," and "have believed." To see what is the real force of a commission and how absurd is the application of it sometimes made by Doctors of Divinity, let us suppose that certain persons are "*commissioned*" by the United States Government to collect a revenue from a certain class of people, importers of foreign goods. The importer pays the Tariff promptly, not to the officer "*commissioned*," but to a fellow-merchant, and pleads that he has done all that the law required of *him*. Suppose this were done in every case—and it would be as right in every case as in one case—who does not see that the "*commission*" is nullified, repudiated, rejected and scorned. It has no more effect than if it had never been given—and yet if the men who thus reject and repudiate it should claim that they are *authorized* to do so *by the "commission" itself*—that they are doing all that the "commission" requires of *them*, would not the government reply, the "commission" *was not addressed to* YOU, but to *our officer*. HE was commissioned to receive your money, and this made it your duty not merely to pay it, but to pay it to *him*. If you paid it to any other not "commissioned" by us, you did not do what the "*commission*" required. You were not required or authorized to pay it at all, except as you were required to pay it *to him*. How could our "commission" to *him* to receive your taxes authorize *you* to pay them to some one else to whom we gave no authority at all?

Or, again, to take a case more directly parallel to the one we have in hand, let us suppose that the Government is desirous to receive strangers and foreigners who have resided in this country a certain length of time, or who possess sufficient knowledge of our institutions, and profess their love for them, into the number of its subjects, and invest them with all the privileges of citizenship—and let us suppose further that every county in every State is divided into certain limited districts, all the *qualified* residents in which are authorized by law to meet at certain times, or as often as they may see fit for the transaction of certain official business committed to their charge by the Government, and the observance of certain ceremonies designed to keep alive the fire of their patriotism. No foreigner, however, is regarded as *qualified* or permitted by law to take any part in these meetings until he has become a citizen. The Government designates the manner of becoming a citizen, prescribes a certain formula and ceremonies, and "*commissions*" certain persons to administer them. Now what is the force of this commission—"*Go ye?*" It says to the persons addressed, who are already citizens, "and teach these foreigners the things they need to know, and then make citizens of them by receiving their profession of allegiance and administering to them the rite or ceremony of initiation. They who are thus qualified and received shall be entitled to all the privileges of citizenship." What is the force of this "commission?" Does it authorize the foreigner who thinks he knows enough, and is sure he loves the country, to go to any one he pleases, and be by him initiated, and then require the meeting of true citizens to receive him

upon that unauthorized ceremony performed by an uncommissioned man, and without any authority from the Government whatever? The commission was *not to him*, to be initiated as he thought best and by whom he pleased. It did not touch him at all except through another. It was that other, the Government officer, who was commissioned, and the only force of it upon the candidate for citizenship is that *it requires him to go to that officer* and to no one else, to be invested with the rights of citizenship.

Something like to this actually occurs every time a man is naturalized as a citizen of the United States of America. There are certain officers commissioned to administer the oath of allegiance, after having ascertained that he is duly qualified to take it. Now, is the commission which gives these officers this authority a commission to the foreigner to go to another foreigner, or to any one else who has *not* been commissioned to administer it, and receive the formula of citizenship from anybody he thinks best? If so, the commission is a nullity—it confers no authority—it has no meaning—it is not a commission at all.

And so in regard to this commission of Christ, it was addressed to somebody. It supposes that there will be somebody to be baptized, and it authorizes somebody to baptize them. If by commanding some *to baptize*, it commands *some others* by implication to *be* baptized, it by the same implication commands them to be baptized *by those*, and *only* by those, *whom it commands to baptize them.*

"Doctor Fuller" says, (p. 68,) "The reference to the baptism unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea shows

how little the Holy Spirit regards the administerator, for there the only ministry was that of the elements." This is wonderful! Why did he not give us another example to the same purpose, as when Christ says, I have a baptism to be baptized with, &c. Here the administraters were the wicked Jews. But was either the one or the other of these the baptism which Christ commanded in the commission? And if not, what has it to do with the question before us? Something very like a baptism happened to the Jews in the Red Sea—and this baptism, or something that could at least be compared to a baptism, and spoken of as a baptism, was performed without any authorized administrator, and *therefore* the Holy Spirit is quite indifferent as to whether the baptism which Jesus commanded His Churches to administer, is administered by them or by any one who may choose or be chosen by the candidate, whether in the Church or out, authorized or unauthorized! When will people learn to use their common sense in reasoning about religious matters, as they do in reference to other subjects?

"Doctor Johnson" finds the authority for the reception of these baptisms in the fact that those who administer them are "unbaptized evangelists," and "unbaptized evangelists" are "*officers*" in the "Kingdom of Christ." But, does he show us the chapter and the verse where they are apointed as such or alluded to in the Scriptures? He does not even attempt to do it. He says they are officers—but we have only his word for it. I want a Thus saith the Lord. "Elder Williams," the reader will see by turning back to his essay, quotes

quite a number of passages, more than all the others; but has he presented a single one which gives authority to the unbaptized to administer Christ's ordinance, while they refuse to receive it. Has he even quoted one for the purpose of showing this, or with the claim that it did show this? Not one—not a solitary one. He goes to the Word to ascertain whether the candidate is responsible for any *unknown* disqualification in the administrator, and proves that "we must every one give account *of himself* to God. Rom. xiv. 12. We do not dispute this. He proves from the Scripture that John had his commission directly from Heaven. and that he was authorized to baptize those who had certain qualifications. We do not question this.

He thinks the Scriptures show that some who were baptized by Christ's disciples, John vi. 2, proved insincere and unworthy. John vi. 66. It does not affect our argument at all, if this be true. Then he quotes the commission, and thus expounds it: "We all regard this as the *law* of baptism, especially so far as 'all nations' are concerned. Baptism, like the Gospel had before been confined to the lost sheep of the House of Israel; but now, like the Gospel, has extended to all nations. This law, therefore, *makes no change* either in the administrator or the subject. Before this, the Saviour's *disciples* baptized *the discipled.* They must do so still." This is just what we are contending for. We perfectly agree with him in all this; but he goes on to say, "Hence although those words were spoken to the *apostles*—the authority to teach and to baptize was not confined to *them.* The example of Philip, Acts vii. 35, 38, fully shows this." True enough; but does it show

that it was not confined to the baptized disciples. If Philip, first a Deacon in the Church at Jerusalem and then an Evangelist, could baptize under this commission, does it follow that those who are *not* Deacons, *not* Evangelists, and *not* even members of a true Church, not even initiated into the visible Kingdom, despisers and rejectors of Christ's ordinance, does it follow that *they also* may baptize under this commission? We cannot think so. And then he refers to three passages in which persons are said to have been baptized, and yet we are not told by whom—and two others in which people were commanded to be baptized—and not informed who should baptize them. (Acts ii. 41; x. 48; xix. 3; ii. 38; x. 48.) But what follows from all this? What if there were a hundred or a thousand places in which baptism is mentioned without saying who was the administrator? Would not the *law of baptism* referred to above determine in every case who, under that law, should be the baptizers? And what says the *law*, according to Elder Williams' own exposition of it? It says, "The Saviour's disciples must baptize the discipled." Does it follow because the administrator is not mentioned that he might have been a priest of Jupiter, or a Jewish Rabbi, or Grecian philosopher? Can Elder Williams, or any other man possessed of common sense, imagine that because it is not here recorded who baptized them, or that they were not informed who should baptize them that they were baptized by people who would not themselves receive Christ's baptism? Certainly not. He had no such idea in his mind. He did not refer to the places for the purpose of proving any such absurd and foolish theory. His object was to show

that the candidate and the administrator was each responsible for himself—and that if the administrator is *not* authorized, it is no concern of the candidate. We do not think, however, that the texts prove even this; but if they did, it would not affect the question before us—that is a question of *Church* duty; and whether the candidate is responsible or not, the *Church* most certainly is.

The administration of baptism is an *official* act, done by authority of *the Church*, and the question is, whether *she* can, in her official capacity as a Church of Christ, recognize as Scriptural and valid the official acts of those whom she does not and cannot, without yielding her own right to existence as a Church, recognize as having any authority to perform them.

But even if the question were one between the candidate and the administrator alone, and in which the Church had nothing to say, we have shown distinctly that the candidate *is* responsible. If the candidate *is bound by the commission* to be baptized at all, he is bound to be baptized by those to whom the commission to baptize was given.

Where, then, we ask again, is the *Scriptural authority* which the Churches must demand and receive before they can adopt the principle which requires them to receive these baptisms as authorized by Christ as lawful and valid, according to the Word of God? It has not been found. There is not even the shadow of it visible. They have abundance of proof that thus saith "Doctor" A., and thus saith "Doctor" B., thus saith Doctor C., and thus saith "Doctor" D. But not the semblance of proof that *"Thus saith the Lord."*

And how is it on the other side? Can *we* find any "Thus saith the Lord?" Is there any Scripture which *limits* the administration at all, and if at all, to whom? We have already seen, that if there were *not*—if in the Scriptures it were left an open question to be decided by considerations other than the expressed will of the Master, we have seen that even then, consistency and common sense would, of necessity, prevent every Baptist Church from receiving these immersions. And, therefore, having shown that there is no Scripture *requiring* their reception, our argument is complete and unanswerable without going any further. Our object is accomplished if we stop just here. Nothing but the fullest and plainest conviction that the Scriptures absolutely require Baptist Churches to receive such baptisms as valid, could, we think, in view of the considerations already presented, induce them so to outrage all Baptist consistency and the dictates of common reason as to admit them.

But now, if we can show by but one single precept, or one single example, or by any fair and *necessary* inference that the Scriptures not only do not require or authorize, but absolutely and positively *forbid* and *prohibit* the Churches of Christ to receive such immersions as valid, and those thus immersed as Church members, we shall have done thus much more than the nature of the case requires of us. And if we fail to do it, our argument already constructed stands just as firmly as if we succeed. We will make the attempt.

ARGUMENT NUMBER ELEVEN.—WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES.

We do not expect to find any passage of the Word of God, which says in so many words, "You shall not regard that as true baptism which was conferred by Pedobaptist and Campbellite ministers without authority from any true Church of baptized believers." We no more look for *this*, than we look for the text which says "You shall not regard as true and valid baptism that which was conferred on one in open unbelief or in helpless infancy"—or that which says, "You shall not baptize such helpless infants, or any others who have not believed." Yet we think we can make the prohibition very plain, and that without the assistance of many words.

1st. We base our argument upon the words of the great commission so often quoted. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16.

This is now our law for baptizing. Those whom *this* authorizes to be baptized, and *only* those, are to be baptized, unless there can be shown *some other* law for baptizing others. Those whom *this* authorizes to baptize them, and *they alone*, are authorized to administer the ordinance, unless there can be shown elsewhere *some other* authority for other persons to do the same thing.

The question is, therefore, whether *this commission*, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things which

I have commanded you, and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Does *this* commission "all the world and the rest of mankind" to administer the ordinance, or does it *limit* the duty of baptizing to a certain class? Was it a universal commission *to all persons* who might choose to become baptizers, or was it a commission only *to such as those to whom it was addressed?* When Christ said, Go *ye*, and Lo, I am with *you*, did he mean, Go *every one who has the strength to put another in the water*, and feels disposed to do it, and, Lo, I am with *them*. The case is too plain to need argument. No denomination or class of persons, so far as I know, who have recognized this as having any present force, have ever been so foolish as to imagine that it was intended to authorize *everybody*, believer or unbeliever, baptized or unbaptized, whether preacher or private member, in the Church or out of it, to administer the ordinances to such as might desire their services. Even *those Baptists* who recognize it as extending to persons out of the Church, and who will not themselves obey it by being baptized, have never pretended that it had no *limit*.

Even *they* admit that it was not intended to authorize *everybody*, and make any one who might choose to act in that capacity, a valid administrator of Christ's holy ordinance. But if limited *at all*, the limit must be definite.

This commission was given to *somebody*. It conferred authority on somebody. It required this specific duty

of baptizing believers to be performed by somebody. And that, "even to the end of the world." Now, who was it? Not the infidel and the scoffer. Not the thoughtless and impenitent. This, no one ever claimed. But did it not authorize *all believers* to baptize all other believers? Some people *seem* to think so. They plead the *piety* and sincerity of Pedobaptist ministers as their qualification. But those to whom the commission was addressed were something more than pious penitent believers. Here is the proof. *Such people* were recognized by the commission as the *subjects* TO BE BAPTIZED, but not as the persons to administer baptism. *"Repent and be baptized."* *"He that believeth and is baptized."* They were not the "YE" who were to baptize them. Something *more* was needful to a baptizer. What was it? Could it be *less* than that he should himself have been baptized? Must he not first obey the command, believe and *be baptized*, before he could set himself up as a preacher of faith and a baptizer of others? It may have been more, but less than this it could not have been, and no man who is destitute of *this* qualification can ever claim to be a valid baptizer under this commission, on the ground that he has repented and believed, or, in other words, is a truly converted and pious man.

But was there no further limitation? Was this commission given to *all believers who have been baptized?* Does it authorize every baptized believer, male or female, child or adult, to administer the ordinance when called upon to do so by any one who regards himself as a believer? It will be observed that the same persons are to baptize who are to preach and to teach.

"Go YE into all the world and PREACH the Gospel." "Go YE, therefore, and TEACH all nations, BAPTIZING them." The work of preaching and baptizing are committed to the same hands, and it follows that the commission is limited not only to baptized *believers*, but to *baptized preachers* of the Gospel. If all baptized believers are commissioned by it to go and preach, then all baptized believers are commissioned by it to baptize those who believe their preaching with a saving faith. But as no UNbaptized believer was authorized by it to do *any thing* but "TO BE BAPTIZED," such were certainly *not* commissioned either *to preach* or *to baptize*; and unless there can be found *some other commission* conferring the authority to do either one or the other, they certainly have *no authority to do either*. But that *all* baptized believers were not to be preachers and baptizers may be inferred from the fact that the same persons who were to preach and then to baptize were to *continue* "*teaching*" those who had been baptized "all things which Christ had commanded them." From which it would seem evident that they were not *all* to take rank at once as teachers and baptizers with those who had preached the Gospel to them and baptized them.

Thus have I made it plain from the very language of the commission itself that it could not have been intended to authorize all believers, or even all baptized believers, to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It *limits* the right and the duty to certain persons; and if God *limits* and confines the authority to them, he of course takes it away from *all others*, unless we will adopt the absurd conclusion that what Christ has expressly confined and limited to some, is yet *not*

limited at all, but is just as open and free to all as though he had made no limitation whatever.

And thus also have I made plain, from the words of the commission itself, that the Churches of Christ *must, as the executors of this commission,* limit the administration within the same bounds, unless you will adopt this other absurdity that the Churches of Christ, acting under the authority of this commission, are at liberty to appoint or recognize as the administrators of baptism, the very persons whom the commission itself expressly excludes from baptizing.

The argument is complete and conclusive, unless there can be found *some other commission* given to the *unbaptized* believers and authorizing *them* to confer on others that baptism which they refuse to receive themselves, though it is expressly required of them, and is the *only* thing that is required of them in *this* commission.

But again. We will be driven to the same conclusion by another process if we examine the words of this commission in connection with *the examples* of baptism as given in the New Testament.

This was, as we have seen, a *joint* commission to preach, baptize, and then to teach all that Christ commanded. It was, as we learn from both Matthew and Mark, given to the eleven surviving apostles; but the addition to it of the words "Lo I am with you alway, even *to the end of the world,*" shows that it was not intended exclusively for them as individuals—They were addressed as the representatives of the *Churches* which they should establish, and the successors of those Churches "to the end of the world." To the Churches,

therefore, the commission says, Go ye and preach my Gospel to all nations, baptizing them," &c. But how was this to be accomplished? Was each Church member, for himself or herself, to set up preaching and baptizing? The apostles did not so understand it; and being Divinely inspired they must have understood it truly. Their understanding of it we gather from their practice and teachings in the Churches. From this source it appears that all the individual members of the Churches were not commissioned to become preachers and baptizers, each *in his own person*, but the Churches, as such, collectively, were charged with the duty of appointing, setting apart and sustaining faithful and competent men for this purpose.

The commission itself, as we have seen, expressly prohibits equally the *unbelieving* and the *unbaptized*, by commanding *them* not to *preach* or to *baptize* believers, but to *believe* and BE BAPTIZED *themselves;* and the interpretation of it by the inspired apostles, shows that those who have believed and been baptized are not *all* to become preachers and baptizers, but are to appoint chosen men not from among the *unbelievers* or from among the *unbaptized*, but of their *own number*, to minister in these offices, and thus fulfill the Saviour's command to preach and to baptize.

These persons were called Bishops or Pastors when they had the charge or oversight of a Church—Elders when reference was had to their official station—Evangelists when they travelled as missionaries from place to place, preaching and baptizing as Philip did. That they were the *preachers* under this commission the narrative most clearly shows, and it is a fair, an almost necessary

inference, that they were also the *baptizers*, except the Churches might see fit, in any instance, to appoint some one to baptize and not to preach, or to preach and not baptize. The *Churches* were charged to do both. The appointment of chosen men from among themselves to *preach*, shows how the apostles understood *this* part of the commission; and there is nothing in the narrative to show that they did not understand that part relating to *baptizing* in the same way. In the absense of any proof to the contrary, we cannot help believing that *the Churches appointed the baptizers*, and did not leave the office to be assumed by any one in the Church who might choose to officiate—much less to the priests of Jupiter, or Priests of Judaism, or any other unbaptized and uninitiated believer or unbeliever out of the Church.

And though not a circumstance had been given by which we could determine whether the baptizers were properly qualified, and duly authorized or not, I would feel sure that they must have been, since the apostles could not but regard the plain arguments of the commission under which they were acting. But let us look at these examples. In no one of them is there any evidence that the baptism was conferred by any one who was not *appointed* and *fully authorized* either by a *commission from Christ himself* or from a Baptist Church, or an inspired apostle. There is not the shadow of evidence that any and every person was equally qualified or that any one was ever recognized as a proper administrator of the ordinance without being qualified.

But, now, let us look at the examples of the administration of baptism which we can find in the Scriptures,

and see if there is any one in which the administrator acted without authority from Christ himself, an inspired apostle, or a Baptist Church acting as Christ's executive under this commission.

The *first* example of a baptizer was that of John. Did he take on himself the office without authority? No. He says, John i. 33, that he was expressly "*sent to* baptize." The great King "*sent*" him to prepare a people made ready for his kingdom. John was *appointed*—set apart to the work of preaching and baptizing believers—and the simple fact that HE alone was at that time commissioned is enough to show that he alone could at that time confer valid baptism. There is no record that in his day any one not specially appointed, whether baptized or unbaptized, took it upon himself to administer the ordinance.

The *next* example is that of the disciples of Jesus. We read that Jesus went into a certain place, and there he tarried and baptized—but that Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples, John iii. 22; iv. 2. These disciples were certainly *appointed* by Christ to do this work, or their baptizing could not have been spoken of as though it had been done by himself.

The *third* example is the first under the commission, that of the Day of Pentecost, (Acts ii.) The apostles were that day the *preachers*. They were acting under the commission, "go preach *and baptize*." Is not the inference a necessary one, that either *they*, or some one of those "disciples who had been *appointed* baptizers by Jesus himself, or some one *appointed* by themselves as his apostles, having authority to set all things in order, were the baptizers? Is there room for even a suspicion

that any of these three thousand were baptized by Pedobaptist ministers, or without authority specially conferred?

The *fourth* example is that of the Samaritans, both men and women, who believed at the preaching of Philip. Who baptized *them?* Philip was the *preacher* under the commission. Was he not also the baptizer under the same commission? Is there room for a suspicion that any of these were baptized by a Pedobaptist minister who had not *obeyed* the commission by being baptized, and consequently could not act under it as a baptizer of others.

The *fifth* example is that in which Philip immersed the eunuch, in the same chapter. Here Philip is mentioned as the baptizer as well as the preacher. He opened his mouth and preached Jesus unto him; and, upon profession of his faith, he baptized him by authority of the same commission which appointed him to preach.

The *sixth* example is in the next chapter, (Acts ix.)—the baptism of Saul of Tarsus. Who baptized him? One Ananias, a man inspired by the Holy Ghost, was sent to *preach* to him, and to restore his sight, by the Lord Jesus himself, who had appeared to Saul in the way as he came to Damascus; and there is every reason to suppose that he, and not some unbaptized believer or unbeliever in the city, administered the ordinance, when he said "arise and be baptized."

The *seventh* example is that in which Cornelius, and those with him, who believed and rejoiced in God, and spake with tongues, were baptized, (Acts x.) Peter had done the *preaching,* and, though he did not admin-

ister the baptism himself, he, as the divinely inspired apostle, had the right to appoint, and did *appoint* another or others to do it. But did any one ever suspect that he appointed *one* of the new converts to baptize the others, or did he command them to be baptized by "*the brethren*" whom he had brought with him, and whom he had consulted about the propriety of conferring the ordinance?

The *eighth* example, which I find was that of Lydia, (Acts xvi.) Paul and Silas, both Baptist ministers, were present. Paul had done the preaching, and one of them must have done the baptizing.

They were put into the prison, and this led to the conversion of the jailor, and his family. And, although their backs were sore from the scourging, and their legs lame from the bruising of the stocks, no one has ever suspected that they called in some unbaptized Jew or Gentile to confer the ordinance in this the *ninth* case.

The *tenth* I find in the 18th chapter, where we only read that many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized. Paul was there, with Silas and Timothy. He says, in one of his epistles, that *he* baptized but few of them; but would he, while two baptized ministers were present, call upon the unbaptized newly-converted heathen to baptize each other?

The *eleventh* example was the re-baptism, if indeed they were re-baptized, of the twelve disciples, discovered by Paul, who had received something as baptism from somebody, as administrator, but without so much as knowing whether there were any Holy Spirit, (Acts xix.) Paul was the preacher, and there is not the most dis-

tant intimation that some unbaptized man was the baptizer.

These, I think, are all the examples one can find, and as no one of them furnishes any evidence that any but a duly qualified and properly appointed administrator executed the behest of Christ's commission to the Churches, we are compelled to believe that the apostles understood and taught the Churches that if *certain* persons were required to be baptized, there were certain persons, and no others, whose duty it was to baptize them; and, unless these first ministers were Pedobaptist or Campbellite preachers, Pedobaptist or Campbellite preachers were not of the number of those who were appointed or recognized as qualified administrators under the commission "go YE," &c.

But there is yet another way in which we can decide this question from the Scriptures. It will be conceded that whatever the Word said to the first Churches was intended for *our* instruction. What would have been wrong for *them* to do in view of the teachings of Christ and the apostles is now wrong for us to do, as the Churches of Christ. Let us, then, suppose this case to have come up in the life-time of the apostles, and see if we cannot find some general rules laid down, by which it must at once and easily have been decided.

Those first Churches, we believe, were *Baptist* Churches, both in regard to their organization, their doctrines and their ordinances. Now, let us suppose that some preacher among them had begun all at once to sprinkle babies, and insist that *this* was the baptism that Christ commanded, and that the neglect to have it done was a sin against God. What instructions would

the Church find in the Word concerning such a man? Would they not turn to 2d Thess. iii. 6, and read: "Now, we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye *withdraw yourselves* from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us." And to Romans xvi. 17: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and *avoid* them." What duty does this impose upon the Church? Must she not cast out of her company such an one? Must she not disown him and his official acts? Yes! If he is a *brother*, a member of the Baptist Church, and does and teaches thus, she must depose him from her ministry and exclude him from her communion. No Baptist doubts this. But, now, suppose he gathers a company of these people, sprinkled for baptism when they were little babes, and organizes them into a society, and calls it a Church of Christ, and claims by its authority, as its minister, to confer the ordinance of baptism on believers, in the name of Christ, and then insists that the Churches which could not commune with him or fellowship his doctrines, the Churches which had deposed and excommunicated him, shall recognize as lawful and Scriptural his official administration of Christ's ordinance. Would not the same law which repudiated and condemned him as a *brother*, trebly condemn him as the leader of another and a rival organization? Surely, what the Church could not countenance in a *brother*, she could not receive and endorse in him as a *stranger!* No man of common sense, who reasons about religious matters as he does about other things, would ever dream

of doing it. If the Scriptures had required it, we would have thought the Bible a strange and contradictory book. But no one claims that they require it. Some think they have found authority in the Word for unbaptized men to *preach* without authority from any Church. "Let him that heareth say come," seems to be regarded by them as a second commission, more extended than the one we have been considering, and authorizing *every* man who hears the Gospel to officiate as a *preacher* of the Gospel. But no one has yet found any text which says "let him that heareth" baptize believers; nor indeed any one which confers the authority to baptize on any but those who are duly qualified and properly appointed by the true Churches, to whom, and to whom alone, Christ has committed the authority in his visible kingdom. And until such a text is found, the commission, the examples and the instructions to the Churches which we have just examined, will not permit a doubt as to the duty of such Churches to reject as unlawful and unauthorized, not only without law, but against law, all pretended baptisms conferred without such authority.

Here we rest; our task is done. Let any man or any Church that still will insist on receiving as valid these immersions, take up our arguments, one by one, or altogether, and point out the errors, if any there be, in the process of our reasoning. If there be none, then, certainly the question is decided both by Scripture and by reason.

CHAPTER IX.

EIGHT CASES FOR APPLICATION.

It yet remains to apply the principles above established to such cases as have actually been presented, or may be presented to the Churches for determination. Such cases, however various in detail, may all be reduced to two classes—those in which the baptism was directly or indirectly *authorized by a true Church of baptized believers*, and those in which it was not. Where it *was* thus authorized, it may be received. Where it was *not*, it must be rejected.

The First Case we will notice is that which has been most frequently presented, and that is where the candidate was at the time of his public profession of religion so fully convinced that Christ's baptism was immersion, that he insisted upon being immersed, although he did not unite with a Baptist Church; and, in compliance with his desire, the minister of a Methodist, or Presbyterian, or some other society, administered to him the so-called baptism, by which he became a member of that society. In regard to such a case nothing more need be said. The grounds upon which the Church should reject

such a baptism have been made sufficiently plain by the whole tenor of our arguments.

The Second Case may not seem quite so clear. It is one in which the baptism was conferred by a minister then acting under the authority of some other body than a Baptist church, but who had once been baptized, and, it may be, ordained as a Baptist minister. Here it cannot be claimed that the baptism is invalid on the ground that the administrator is himself *unbaptized*, but it must be admitted that it was performed *without authority*, direct or indirect from any Baptist church, since no church can be supposed to confer authority to administer Christ's ordinances upon a deposed minister or an excluded member; and no minister could be found officiating for a Pedobaptist society, and, in their name, administering the ordinances, who is not or ought not to be deposed and excluded from a Baptist church, if he ever had any connection with one. We have said, and shown again and again, that it is not for want of *baptism*, but for want of church membership and *authority*, that these baptisms are to be regarded as invalid.

The Third Case is where the immersion was administered by a Baptist minister in the name of a Baptist Church and by their authority, but with the understanding that the baptized person was not to be received into the Church as a Baptist, but to unite with some of the Pedobaptist societies, or remain without any visible connection with any religious organization. This is a case which may possibly admit of doubt. It is certain that no Church should authorize, and no minister should administer a baptism under such circumstances. But

yet, having been done by Church authority and by a right administrator, the administration should, in our opinion, be rejected, upon the grounds that the candidate was disqualified to receive it, as certainly in most, or all such cases, he must be; and that the Church exceeded the constitutional limits of her authority when she undertook to baptize a member into a society of errorists, or with the intention to leave him in the sinful world with no Church connection. Baptist Churches should baptize only those who so far understand, and so design to obey Christ's laws, that they will not refuse association with Christ's *visible people.*

Case Fourth, is where a Baptist minister, acting by authority of a Baptist Church, has baptized converts, but without having been himself properly baptized—that is to say, he was immersed by a Methodist, or a Presbyterian, or a Campbellite, and by the authority of some of those organizations, and was received by a Baptist Church regarding that as true baptism, and by it ordained, and put into the ministry. Is a baptism conferred by him a valid baptism? We answer upon the principles already laid down, most certainly it is. So long as *the Church* regards him as a member and a minister, so long, for all *official* purposes, he is a member and a minister, and a want of right baptism no more invalidates his *official* acts performed in the name of the Church and by the authority of the Church than a want of *right faith* would have done. The Church received him in her ignorance, supposing him to have been truly baptized, and as such entrusted him with authority to administer her ordinances. When she discovers her mistake, she should correct it by at once

regarding him as unbaptized, but until she does, he is an authorized administrator. So in the

Fifth Case, or that wherein a man destitute of saving faith, it may be, a base hypocrite, or one self-deceived. An unconverted man is received by the Church as a true convert, and elevated to the ministry. He baptizes scores or hundreds, and at length falls into open sin and is excluded. Does this invalidate the baptisms administered by him while he remained a minister in good standing? Not at all. So long as he was a member and a minister, his *official* acts were valid for all Church purposes, whatever his secret personal character before God may have been. The Church in her ignorance believed him to be a true believer, such he professed to be, as such she entrusted to him her ordinances. When she is undeceived, she must depose and exclude him; but till she does so, his official acts are valid. So long as *she* regards him as a believer, he is for all *Church* purposes to be so regarded by others.

The Sixth Case which presents itself to our mind, is one in which a Baptist minister, and a good and pious man, has, without any sufficient fault of his, been excluded from the Church, or deposed from the ministry, and yet goes on baptizing, as though he had been the subject of no such action. Are such baptisms valid? Clearly, they are *not*. The validity of the baptism, so far as the administrator is concerned, does not depend, as we have seen, upon his piety or upon his baptism, but upon the *authority* which he has received, directly or indirectly from a true Church of baptized believers to administer it. He could take no such authority with him out of the Church, and no Baptist Church could

recognize any official act of his, however innocent she might believe him to be, unless he had first been restored to Church membership, and again authorized to administer the ordinances by the same Church that deposed and excluded him, or by *some other* of *equal authority* with it in the kingdom of Christ.

The Seventh Case, is where a baptism has been administered, as in the case of Roger Williams, by one not baptized or not authorized by a true Church of baptized believers, in consequence of some alleged necessity, growing out of a supposed impossibility to find any such Church, or minister of such Church. Some have thought, that in such an emergency, the regular law of baptism may be set aside, and some one may take it on himself to begin a new series of administrations without authority from any Church. But it seems more reasonable, that when an ordinance *cannot* be observed *as it was commanded,* observance of it is not required. Obedience to positive enactments is doing just what is commanded, just *as* it is commanded to be done, and nothing more or less. We may not substitute or change God's ordinances. If we *cannot* obey, we are not required to obey. A Jew, or a family of Jews, cast on a desert island, might earnestly desire to keep the Passover, but if they had no *lamb,* they would not be required to offer a goat, or a serpent, or any thing living which they might find upon the island, in its place. They could only *observe the Lord's Passover* by offering a *male lamb* without spot or blemish, and of a certain age. So in regard to baptism; if circumstances render it *impossible* to do what God commands, we are simply to leave it undone, until in His providence the way is

opened for its right performance. We are not to *substitute* something else which we *can* do, but which he has *not* required. If God has appointed or limited the administrators of baptism, therefore, and we cannot find such as he requires, we are not to put such as we may see fit to employ in their places. There is, however, no such necessity as we are speaking of. We do not believe there ever has been. A little trouble and delay would have at any time secured an authorized administrator. But, whatever may have been true of other ages and other lands, no one can now claim that he was not rightly baptized in this country for want of a Baptist Church to authorize, and a Baptist minister to confer the ordinance.

The Eighth Case—and I mention it only because some seem to have found in it a difficulty, is this: If the action of a Church is necessary to authorize one to confer baptism, how can baptism be conferred by our missionaries in foreign lands, or by our Evangelists in our own? We answer, simply on the ground that the *Church* in ordaining, or setting one apart to the missionary work, or even to the work of a minister, is understood to confer authority to administer the ordinances wherever there may be occasion for doing so. The missionary is acting by the authority conferred upon him by the Church who sends him, and to her he is amenable for his official and Christian conduct. Conventions, Associations, Missionary Boards, and the like, may make provision for his support and comfort in his work, but they can give him no authority to preach or to baptize, nor can they come between the Church and the minister to interfere with the rights which the

Church has conferred. When the Church chooses, and sets him apart by ordination to the work of a pastor or Evangelist, she empowers him in her behalf to "go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

These cases, we think, will either include or parallel all that are likely to come before any Church. We do not give our opinion as having any, even the very slightest authority over the brethren. God forbid. We simply state what, after a careful investigation of the subject, we think to be the teaching of the Word of God. We have often been in error, and we ask no one to take our word or our opinion in these decisions, or in anything,; but let each one for himself *search the Scriptures*," to see whether these things are so. By them, and by them alone, each Church of Christ must be determined. If we have failed to find their meaning, it is not for want of an honest and earnest desire, nor for want of careful and patient study. But yet do not claim to be the leader or the guide, but only the *helper* of our brethren in their attempts to understand the truth.

The general rule to which our investigations as here laid down has driven us, in this: A baptism is lawful and valid when it is conferred upon a believer in Christ by an administrator appointed by a true Church of baptized believers. If there are any other cases differing materially from those mentioned above, the application of this rule will probably enable any one to decide them for himself.

CHAPTER X.

SOME OTHER PRACTICAL QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO CHURCH DUTIES.

QUESTION FIRST.—This we state substantially in the language of a correspondent in Virginia.

QUERY. Shall a consistent Baptist continue to fellowship a Church which receives Methodist immersed believers without baptizing them? and if not, what course must he pursue?

The question is a very natural one, and more difficult to answer than might at first glance appear. The duty of the *Church* is plain. She ought *not* to receive such subjects; but if a Church falls into some error of doctrine or practice, shall any *one* member set up his opinion, against that of the assembly? Certainly he may, and give them kindly and in brotherly love, the *reasons* for his dissent. If the Church proposes to receive such a subject, every member who disapproves should present his objections, he should vote against it, and then if overruled, he may ask leave to *record his protest* on the Church records with a brief statement of his reasons.

Thus far he surely may go, and no one can find occasion of offence. But as the reception of such an unbaptized candidate through the error or ignorance of the Church, would no more *destroy its claims to be a true Church* of Christ, than the reception of an *unbeliever* through a similar mistake would do it, we do not see in the act any thing which calls for a disfellowshipping of the Church as a true Church of Christ. The brother who disapproves of her course, may remain in her and lift his voice for the whole truth until his brethren shall be convinced, or until he can find some other Church convenient to him with which he can more perfectly coincide. Few, if any, Baptist Churches, will be willing to disregard a kind but firm and persistent protest from one who is a good and consistent member, for the sake of pleasing or securing the membership of one *not* a member ,and who was not yet sufficiently instructed to know that baptism conferred without authority from Christ, is not Christ's baptism, and that Christ conferred no authority to baptize believers upon any but those who had themselves been baptized as believers.

QUESTION SECOND.—*Ought consistent Baptist churches to continue to fellowship as true churches those which persist in receiving these unauthorized immersions as true and valid baptism?*

The decision of this question depends upon another, and that is whether this is such an error in faith or practice as vitiates their claim to be accounted true and lawful churches of Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures. If they are true churches, we should, it seems to us, continue to fellowship them as such, but protest against their error, and with kindness and patience wait

for the time which will probably soon come when we shall all see "eye to eye."

But, as an honest mistake in any church as to whether an applicant for membership had truly believed would not unchurch the body, so an honest mistake as to whether one had been baptized would not vitiate its claims to be a church. The utmost that other churches need to do is to adopt the means to make their own sentiments known, and publicly protest against such innovations upon the requirements of God's Word and the practice of the first churches. Each Church is by the Lord constituted sole judge of who shall be its members, and of all matters relating to its internal polity and discipline. To its own Master it standeth or falleth. Let each Church, therefore, be careful for itself to conform to the teaching of the Word, and leave its sisters in peace to do the same. If we disagree about these teachings, let us not quarrel like enemies, anxious to criminate each other; but, in love, let us bear each other's burdens—in brotherly affection, point out each other's faults—and by the faithful witnessing for the truth, we will soon drive out all error. We have been too ready to divide and too slow to unite. Nothing should be made the ground of disfellowship towards any brother which does not disqualify him to be a good member of a Baptist Church, and nothing should be made the ground of disfellowship towards a sister Church which does not impeach her claims to be a true Church of Jesus Christ, holding the faith, having the ordinances, the character of membership, and the organization which characterized the Jerusalem pattern. With less than this she is not a Church of Christ, and more

than this we need not ask. Let us seek for union, not by complaining of others, but by seeking for ourselves, and proclaiming abroad the whole Truth of God. We need not compromise the Truth—we need not conceal it. We need not, nay we *must* not hesitate to *fully* carry it out in all our practice. But we need not be busy in searching out our neighbors' faults or failings. We are not called upon to sit in judgment upon those who chance to see things in a light differing somewhat from that which guides our action. Let us commend the right by our own obedience. Let us condemn the wrong by our own right-doing, and not by finding fault with others who are doubtless as honest and as desirous to do right as we are, but have not yet been able to find the perfect path of *entire conformity* to the *exact* requirements of our blessed Lord. He will bless the example of the careful and consistent followers of His Word to the correction of those who have been too easily led by a false charity, not merely to pity but practically to approve the errors into which so many who bear the name of Christ have fallen. The Lord hasten the time when all who love him shall rejoice together in complete obedience to all the *outward* as well as all the *inward* requirements of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

THE END.

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